

A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR RAISING AWARENESS FOR PEER-LEADERS AND  
PEER-LEARNERS FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE POST-MODERN  
GENERATION USING MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR RAISING AWARENESS FOR PEER-LEADERS AND PEER-LEARNERS FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE POST-MODERN GENERATION USING MEDIA TECHNOLOGY**

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This project sought to use media technology to raise awareness about leadership and leadership skills for youth ages fourteen through seventeen at Union Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The methodology used for this project was a case study consisting of group sessions, film, Youtube, and Social media to teach leadership skills. The data triangulation used for this project include: pre and post-test, interviews, surveys, blog responses and parent assessments. Through this project, student's knowledge base about leadership skills increased. Students who participated in this youth leadership program using media technology showed an increase in knowledge base about overall leadership.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I owe a debt of gratitude to my parents, Fredrick and Rosa Hood for your support and reminding me of God's for my life. You are the best parents ever! I do not know where I would be if it was not for you. Thank you so much for being who you are!

To my sister, Kiadrick Hood, thank you for being the best sister in the world! Your support is like none other. Thank you and I love you.

To George Scott, for the past nine years you have walked with me, prayed with me, and cried with me through this journey. George, thank you for being my personal cheerleader at all times. You are my best friend and I am glad God sent you to watch over me!

To my mentors, Dr. Sir Walter Mack Jr. and Dr. Herbert Miller II, thank you for being the model of what a mentor should be. Your guidance to be an excellent student and pushing me to move beyond my comfort zone is what I needed. Thank you!

To my Pastor, Teacher and Spiritual Father, Rev. Dr. Sir Walter Mack Jr. Thank you so much for your support and believing in me. Many times you had greater faith in me than I did in myself! You are the best pastor and I appreciate and love you very much.

To My Family, words cannot express how appreciative I am of you. You have been with me through it all. I love you and appreciate the many levels of support and prayers you have given me through this process.



To my Union Baptist Church Family, thank you for praying and supporting me through this process. You have watched me grow from a college student to an adult.

Thank you for believing in me.

To the Union Baptist Church Staff, Thank you for praying with me, working with me, and seeing in me what I did not see in myself. Thank you and I appreciate everything you have done!

To the best Youth Ministry in the nation! Thank you for trusting me to guide you to spiritual wholeness. UBC Youth Ministry Rocks!

To my extended family and friends, thank you for your support and your love.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my grandmother, Penella Barbour Lane. Thank you for seeing “it” in me when I did not see “it” in myself. Rest in the Arms of God, Until We Meet Again!

## INTRODUCTION

In a recent discussion with a student at Union Baptist Church, I was asked this question: “How do you know if you are a leader? How can I become a good leader like you Ms. Kia?” The reply was simple, “Don’t be a *good* leader, be a *great* leader and be who God has called you to be.

However, in a society that challenges your belief, hopes and dreams, it is difficult to be a great leader. Leadership is something that must be developed and cultivated. However, youth in today’s society struggle with becoming effective leaders. When it is easier and more acceptable to make wrong decisions; when bullying is prevalent, sex is customary, and dropping out of high school is acceptable, one must pose this question, “Where are the young leaders?”

Furthermore, what is our society, communities, and ministries are doing to help raise awareness to our youth about leadership? Are we compelling youth to be the leaders of the present and the future? Youth matter and if the world is going to be move forward, their must be a process that reaches students and help them consider their leadership abilities and encourage them to be examples to their peers.

*A Biblical Model For Raising Awareness for Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology* is a program designed to empower and raise awareness for peer-leaders and peer-learners about leadership while using

media technology as a tool. This model will aid students in identifying their ability to be leaders and discover ways in which they can use their gifts, talents, and abilities in their communities, especially in ministry. The use of technology as a tool serves as an instrument that is relevant to the population in this study.

The module will consist of youth between the ages of fourteen through seventeen from Union Baptist Church. Participants will participate in a seven-week program that will meet once a week, examining leadership skills and viewing it through the lens of the participants. The qualitative research strategies used consist of the following: Pre-assessment, post-assessment, participant-interviews and parent-interviews. This strategy's goal is to engage youth to consider themselves as leaders and agents of change, resulting in positive outcomes and personal development.

Chapter One provides the early concept of the model in the form of a spiritual autobiography. A context in which the model was carried out is established, and reasons for executing the model are given.

In Chapter Two, entitled *The State of The Art in This Ministry Model*, the writer gives information drawn from literature review.

Chapter Three explores the theoretical foundation of the model, which discusses historical, biblical, and theological justification for the project. It also gives the importance and relevance of God in the midst of the model.

Chapter Four, *The Methodology of the Model*, explains the model and design used in the project and how the data was collected to prove the hypothesis.

Chapter Five focuses on the field experience, describing what actually happened during the implementation of the project. This chapter discusses data analysis from the pre-test and post-test.

Chapter Six, *The Reflection, Summary, and Conclusion*, is the final chapter, which discusses whether the anticipated results were reached and what were some of the project's limitations.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

God always provides evidence that confirms the reality and presence of God's power. There is no doubt that throughout my life, God has always been present. There were times when, as a Christian, the thought of quitting—turning back and running away from God—seemed like the only option available. Always in those times, though determined to give up, God provided a path that led back to ministry. Throughout life's experiences, God has provided favor and provision. God's voice has resided in my life and spoken truth regarding my future. Throughout this journey, there have been times when uncertainty was permanent in my path. However, growth occurred in learning to trust in the Lord, despite not knowing God's plan for my life. It was normative to wonder what God's plan was, and how I fit into it. This journey has been a process—a process wrapped up in years of confusion and doubt. Yet, there were times in which I was certain God was there. God's hand can feel very uncomfortable at times, especially when it is not familiar; God's presence—that secret place of God's love, God's joy, God's peace!

As a young child this was not imagination. It was real! There is a different, yet comforting feeling in knowing the presence of the Lord dwells within. Throughout life, God's presence has always dwelt with me. It has helped shape and mold the view of who God is and the call God has for our lives. The Lord's healing hand has covered my life. Although there was uncertainty about the future, one thing is for sure, God will carry out

God's promises and always provide everything it takes to develop any believer into who God has called them to be.

Growing up in Clayton, North Carolina, it was taught to understand and value life, God, and community at an early age. Our parents were very influential and introduced the value of serving God to us. They taught the value of hard work and instilled the importance of acknowledging God. Christ was the center of everything for the family. Parents taught us being a Christian meant more than just going to the church—a physical building. We were responsible for representing Christ, the person, and not a building.

The church was always considered the space of learning and growing. It was the church that provided faith, guidance, and assurance that leadership was the source of the ministry that would be discovered later in life. However, this discovery did not come without tribulation, victories and defeats.

It was our parents that provided the introduction to Christ and required Christ to be the center of everything. Growing up in a home where both parents were present, hard work was not a foreign concept when it came to our parents. There were times in which faith took the place of money and hope replaced fear. The two-bedroom singlewide trailer was the beginning for the family. The home became a haven for numerous people. It was a space for those who were lost, but you found Christ there. Seeing this as child, it was difficult not to think about how important it was to give and to be a source of strength for others. We gave our all to persons in need and better yet, we gave them Christ.

Fortunate to grow up in a home where both parents were present, personal conversations about Christ was not foreign. Inquisitive about the future, mom was asked by myself about God's plan for my life. She recollected a conversation between her and a

church member about the ministry of her child. The member told her she was going to have a child that was going to be “special to God.” To my mother, this was only confirmation of what she wanted her child to be. She wanted a healthy child, and she wanted that child to be a sacrifice to God. Her desire was to have a child that would be a servant to the Kingdom of God.

There was always something going on at church—meetings, choir rehearsals, conventions—that we had no choice but to be there. While others got to choose whether they would sing in the choir, or usher, or come to church at all, we were the only children that could be counted on to always be in church.

Although my parents were married, they were separate in their place of worship. Father was born and raised in the African Episcopal Church tradition. My mother’s denominational roots rested in the tradition of the Baptist Church. Even though my parents attended different churches, they had a clear line of communication regarding what worship meant to them. We never heard them argue or fuss about this issue. Father would go to his church and mother would go to hers. They allowed us to make our own choices as to which church to attend.

At the time, our father’s church was thriving. They had a well-established membership and a loving, caring female pastor. She was a phenomenal preacher. We enjoyed going to that church because each Sunday there was a different view of leadership; there was a woman preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. For many, that was different because the image in leadership resembled us. There was a woman preaching, it was a different voice, it was a different look in leadership.



Unlike my mother's church, my father's church believed and supported women in leadership roles. The people in my mother's church were steeped in tradition and rooted in customs that, in essence, hurt people rather than help build them up. I enjoyed her church because of its Bible teaching and because they believed in the youth and honored God. But as is the case with many churches, there were some members whose mission, it seemed, was to hurt others.

However, the pastor taught the congregation to love God and challenged members to find a deeper understanding about God's Word. He emphasized the importance of knowing God through worship, and by attending Bible study and other church functions like the Baptist Training Union. The pastor did not preach, teach, or look like the pastor of our father's church, but he was effective as a pastor. He took pride in educating his congregation, and he cared for and provided pastoral care for everyone. Though there were some who did not particularly care for him, he never allowed that to stop him from fulfilling his mission to please God and to empower God's people. He was the ideal of what leadership should be. Watching him provided a good image for anyone on how to be an effective leader. In a space that not always valued youth, he took the time to cultivate a culture and not only taught about stewardship, but he lived that life also.

Not being like other seven-year-old girls who ran around the church, laughed through service or frequented the restrooms during worship, ministry was a serious topic for me. People at the church, parents, and family members helped shape the inner leader inside. My mother helped me connect my practice to a spiritual proclamation called salvation. That is when the remarkable journey began, my acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. What was interesting about stepping out and taking this

journey was a conversation between a few of my friends after my journey. They wanted to know about the experience, the feeling of connection between God and myself, and how they too could experience this level of liberation.

Thinking back to that time in my life necessitates a reflection on my place and position of my life today. Coaching people daily is a constant part of my life. Questioning God about difficult experiences and the many sufferings has happened on occasion. Though there is always an awareness of how that particular part of my journey was not designed to destroy me, but to equip me to be able to minister to others. They were given to me to be used as tools for ministry—instruments to help others successfully go through life's most difficult situations. My baptism experience taught me to go first in order for others to follow.

Being so young on this journey, this became a first for the congregation, but it was not the last. Many other young people began to acquire God and step up to being leaders in the ministry. The church began to notice more youth baptism, youth leadership pursuits and the need to become connected to the youth culture. The church had to act now or lose later. The act was quick but it was not always received from everyone. There was resistance from many about the level of understanding for youth to be in such leadership roles. Students, parents and parishioners saw that leadership development was essential for this group of youth and if they did not respond to the need, it may cause a major loss in the end.

Throughout this journey, the concept of leadership was the heartbeat and pathway that was vital to the overall development of ministry. Getting older, my growth continued in God continued to develop. During this period of growth, major changes were

experienced in my life: my first romantic crush, best friend arguments, and being grounded because of disobedience. There were many life-altering events that occurred through my adolescent years. Somehow, God's unfailing love kept me as God reminded me of the provision and promises that were soon to come.

It was during this stage of my life God began to speak to me. The calling to preach the gospel came to me at the age of fifteen. God was speaking to me through visions, dreams, and people. Fear came over me. What if this calling was an error on my part? What if people thought my being called to preach was making a mockery of God? Is fifteen too young? Did God really call me to preach? It is obvious now that my uncertainty came from the scrutiny from the members of my church. My being filled with the Holy Spirit occurred at the age of fourteen. Sitting in my normal seat as the choir sang *Changed* and reflecting on how God was changing me, tears began to run down my face. Having no idea what was happening, it was obvious this was a divine experience. It was uncontrollable, but it felt right. While most knew by then my worship was genuine, there were some who thought it was manufactured and fake. They suggested my aunt was teaching us how to be "emotional" in church. They did not realize my connection with God had nothing to do with my aunt, it was genuine—it was about recognizing and reverencing the power of God and being receptive God's presence.

These false accusations hurt and gave a different view of what people are like. Memories of wanting to leave that church and go someplace that would accept me for who I was linger in my mind. My mother knew how hurtful the people at that church were toward me, and would sometimes allow me to visit other churches. The experience at some of those churches left me feeling liberated and free. The environment gave me

space to praise God without chains. It was comforting and reassuring to no longer be a trending topic for the members, but be a part of a congregation where everyone was free. However, those were only temporary visits because of eventually having to return to my church.

The love for my mother for understanding me and being willing to allow me space and freedom to be me is incomparable. She always respected me and my desire to have more of God. Whatever it was, she supported me and helped to guide me through. She only wanted me to be who she knew God had called me to be. Even today, she always has the best answers, best hugs, and best advice. She is always honest with me. She knew what was needed and allowed me to search for my place in God without any hesitation. My mother knew her child needed protection and assurance regarding my faith.

Continued recollections of my journey as a teenager, cause me to contemplate God's hands on a special project given to me. God directed me to form a gospel choir at my high school. Of course, there were questions and challenges to God about how this was project going to work. Nevertheless, my trust God resulting in moving forward with the project. The first step was to go to my high school principal and ask permission to form the choir. At first, he appeared a bit hesitant and gave me a long list of things that would need to be in place before the choir could be organized. One requirement was finding an advisor to support the choir.

In a small rural community, where about ninety percent of the staff was Caucasian, this became a very complex assignment. For two weeks, we met with teachers and other staff members to see if anyone would be interested. With no takers, we were

about to give up when we met with the last person on the list. He happened to be an African-American. We presented the proposal to him, and he readily agreed to serve as advisor. We could not believe it was happening. We went back to my principal, informed him we had secured an advisor, and gave him all the necessary paperwork. He approved my request and we were on our way. For the first time in the history of that school, we now had a gospel choir.

At the first rehearsal, there were more than one hundred students present. We had a full band, an executive board, established by-laws, and a booking agent. Bus drivers from our district volunteered their time to drive us wherever we needed to go. In time, we became one of the strongest organizations in the school. Our goal was to provide students with a place to worship God, and we did just that. Students had an outlet to sing praises to God and share their faith with one another. It was a place where students could be free in their worship.

We had no idea what we were doing when we stepped out to do what God had directed us to do. Though, we knew God wanted it to happen. Many doubted it could happen, but we knew with God all things are possible. Why did God want this to happen? Why did God choose me? My belief is the choir was to take Christ into the schools. At that particular time, there was a battle regarding prayer in schools, people being allowed to express their faith in school, and other matters related to religion. However, in the midst of a society that disowned Christ, this organization was a reminder that Christ can never be replaced. With unity of more than one hundred voices, God had to be heard. Whether people wanted to listen or not, the voice of God rang out throughout that school and throughout the city. Racial barriers were torn down and God was exalted.

At eighteen, there was struggle with the concept of being called to preach. As mentioned before, being called to preach at such a young age was intimidating. There was fear and concern of what people would think or say about me. Dealing with this fear was a struggle. Struggling with those thoughts and emotions caused me to consult with my pastor. Surely, he would understand what I was going through and help guide me through it.

The conversations I had with God and the visions God had given me were shared with him during this discussion. My pastor told me he would work with me. He said, “If you are called, then call me every day until He releases you to preach.” From May to December of that year, I called him every day just as he asked. During that time, he answered his phone only once. The only question he asked was, “Do you still feel that you have been called by God?” Here was a young woman trying to filter through life and felt as if life was filtering through her. Maybe this perceived call to preach was in error. Maybe the calling was to be a missionary or give support to a ministry. Maybe this was not God’s plan for me after all. Now, there was sense that God was punishing me because of my rejection of God. My theology about the whole situation was twisted, and this was the place in which self-reflection must occur. The rejection from my pastor had made me question what was present in my heart—God had placed a calling on my life.

With mixed emotions and uncertainty about life, another step and another change was right around the corner. Preparing to enter the world of college was next. Winston-Salem State University was the next step in my journey. Choosing WSSU was not by chance because my mother is a proud alumnus of WSSU. During those college days there was a constant wrestling with the concept of being called to preach. Several Christian

originations helped shape my ministry. Connections were made with numerous persons who were serious about ministry. Talking with my pastor about my call into ministry was considered seemed useless by then. My opinion at that time was he was not sincere, was rejecting me, and did not care about me. My arrival to Winston-Salem was during a time when confusion about my future and doubting my call to ministry was prevalent.

As a college student, finding a place to fit in and a place to do ministry was never a problem. Through the school's gospel choir, my ministry began to take shape. Being voted choir chaplain was a position that enabled me to mentor students both in and outside the choir. God provided opportunities for me to minister to more than 300 students through prayer, counseling, and mentoring. My dorm room became known as a place of healing and prayer. People knew of my seriousness when it came to God and supporting them was my purpose. The gospel choir helped me examine my purpose and myself. Seeking God was important because there was something strange and unexplainable happening in my life. Being choir exhorter and chaplain lasted for four years. Helping empower people through the Word of God was a joy. A transformation or shifting was taking place in my life, but being sure of exactly what it was difficult.

It took seven years for me to say yes to God. Doing so has afforded me the opportunity to go to various places to minister to people and to be in a place where God and others can minister to me. It is for certain that throughout this journey, my experiencing God has been transformative and challenging. My journey has allowed me to experience the hand of God in a way that has shaped my life and my ministry.

Even so, lessons have been learned. One significant lesson is, when God has ordained something for your life, it will come to pass. The challenge a believer faces is

being willing to go through life knowing God will make situations and circumstances all work out for his/her good. Not having walked far in my journey, my being God's work in progress is evident. Nevertheless, the journey has given me meaning about the hand of God. God's hand never leaves the potter's wheel. Through this process, we are always being shaped into vessels that God will use. The challenge is how long we stay on the wheel. Are we willing to be molded, pressed, or put into the fire so God can use us?

At first, there was a reluctance to go through it, which caused me to challenge and question the validity and presence of the hand of God. Though all along it was believed God was there. In truth, God's hand never left me and me leaving God was not an option. God has always been with me. The mistake made in my life was forgetting God's promises. Continued growth in ministry has caused me to recognize as a young woman, there is no need to be ashamed of my past, but rather allow my past to be a bridge that links me to my future. Yes, my past includes being molested, verbally abused, and rejected. However, that will not stop or hinder me because it is all part of my journey. My ministry is birthed from a place of hurt and healing. If it were not for the hurt, healing could not be known. My ministry is covered and protected with fervent and constant prayer because of remembering the experiences that brought me here. It is certain this is a continuous journey and God is still shaping me. It is important for me to hold fast to the hand of God and not let go because there is still much work for me to do.



## Context

“A little church with a big heart.”

That was how the Union Baptist Mission Church was described shortly after it was first started in 1920, under the leadership of the late T.S. Staten. Its first worship service was held in the home of Mother Taylor in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> With a focus on fellowship and the study of God’s Word, the newly organized church had determined to establish itself as an institution of integrity within the community. It was not long before the church would transition into a beacon—not just in the community, but in the city as a whole.

The Rev. Abraham H. McDaniels became pastor of the church in 1933. Shortly afterward, the word “Mission” was dropped from the name and the church officially became known as Union Baptist Church. Under McDaniels’ leadership, the church initially took a dramatic turn, which saw its membership drop to only eight members when the very first service took place. Despite the decline in membership, McDaniel’s was not deterred in his mission to see the church grow. He preached to those eight members out of an old rented house on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Underwood Avenue.<sup>2</sup> The offering in that first service was \$1.50—just enough to make the first rent payment.

As membership increased, a number of programs and auxiliaries were established to meet the growing needs of the church. Those included four Sunday school classes, four official boards to help govern the operations of the church, and forty-five individual

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<sup>1</sup> *The History of Union Baptist Church*, DVD, produced by Claude Rucker (Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

auxiliaries and clubs. These groups added great richness to the goal of Union Baptist Church.

McDaniels also had a strong commitment to youth. As a result, he oversaw the formation of one of the largest youth choirs in the city. The choir, which had nearly eighty active members and sang once a month and achieved national attention. This type of commitment gave an entirely new meaning to outreach for ministry and the community at large.

In addition to its commitment to youth, the Union Baptist Church congregation was fearless in its efforts toward enhancing the surrounding community through service. Union Baptist was actively involved, for example, in the development of agencies such as Crisis Control, a local community agency that assists persons in crisis situations by providing financial support, pharmaceutical needs, spiritual guidance, and nutritional provision to individuals and families. The church was also actively involved with the city's Race Relations Committee, and the development of the Experience in Self-Reliance Agency, an agency designed to assist working low-income families and chronically homeless persons to escape poverty and develop plans to become self-sufficient.

On October 18, 1981, Dr. Benjamin Franklin Daniels was installed as the new pastor of Union Baptist Church. Daniels came to the ministry with a very similar focus of his predecessors, placing a strong emphasis on the spiritual, social, and economic needs of both the church and the community. Daniels did such things as enhancing the sound in the main auditorium of the church by installing a new system, and developing new church programs while maintaining existing one.

In April 1999, Rev. Dr. Sir Walter L. Mack, Jr. was appointed pastor of Union Baptist Church. Like those who preceded him, Dr. Mack recognized the need for the ministry to have comprehensive development of their spiritual, economic and social needs. Within the first year under Dr. Mack's leadership, Union Baptist experienced tremendous growth—seeing its membership expand to over 500.<sup>3</sup> Such growth resulted in the creation of several full-time staff positions, one of which was a program director—the first of its kind in the city. Under Dr. Mack's leadership, the church continued its expansion project, completing the second floor of its new building, further enhancing its sound system, adding a liturgical art gallery, and increasing the size of its parking lot.

Dr. Mack's concern for community relations and outreach resulted in the church's Missions Team making its first evangelistic trip overseas to minister in Haiti. In addition, his strong commitment to economic development resulted in the church purchasing and renovating a grocery store and a twelve-unit apartment complex.

Under the direction and leadership of Dr. Mack, the membership at Union Baptist Church has grown to more than 3,000 and operates nearly seventy auxiliaries and programs. The church has continued in its mission and focus through special assistance programs like the Corner2Corner Drug Dealers and Street Life Conference, a free program designed to rehabilitate drug dealers and street people and give them a second chance at life. Ministries in the church are centered on worship, Bible study, fellowship, and evangelism. Union Baptist Church strives to address the concerns of the community and builds its focus on such values.

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<sup>3</sup> Pamphlet (brochure) *Union Baptist Church Auxiliary Guild and Description Manual*. Winston-Salem, North Carolina, (year published unknown).

## Current Ministry Dynamics

When Rev. Dr. Sir Walter Mack arrived in 1999, membership at Union Baptist Church rested at about 500 congregants. Today, the church has more than 3,500 members strong—making it one of the largest congregations in the city of Winston-Salem. The church population is comprised of a diversity of people ranging in age from infant to nearly ninety years old. According to statistics recorded in its data base, the population and demographics of the Union Baptist Church membership are as follows: 15.8% between the ages of infant to 17; 37.4% between 18 and 35; 12.7% between 36 and 42; 33.9% between 43 years and up. Of the 3,577 members on roll, 568 are ages infant to 17; 1,338 are between 18 and 35; 455 are between 36 and 42; and 1,216 are 43 years and older.<sup>4</sup>

Union Baptist Church has established itself as a beacon in the community and continues to strive for excellence through its successful programmatic approach to doing ministry.

## Synergy

If anyone is to understand their present, it is important to understand the direction and driving force of their past. Our experiences are exceptional tools that can become pathways to our purpose and allow us to redefine our understanding of who we are and what we are. Furthermore, it is in our past that we should be able to identify areas in which we learn how to survive and teach others how to do the same. By taking the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

experiences of our past and enmeshing them with the testimony of our present with expectations of a better future, anyone can begin to understand and define their purpose.

The Spiritual Autobiography revealed several components of my life that were transformative. Identifying the foundations of my past, it has become clear the hand of God has been evident throughout the transition of my life. As I think of the most transformative components of my life with regard to where my ministry is now, it is impossible to ignore the foundation that allowed me to move forward through many difficult moments of in life. The passion for being a leader was evident and revealed my overall desire to move others in the same direction.

My foundation and concept of ministry has allowed me to understand the importance of my self-worth, both spiritually and intellectually. Recognizing the concept of ministry patterns throughout my life, it is evident ministry was a part of my identity then and now. It is also evident that ministry was not just a routine, but the spiritual route that led me to this place. Ministry is not about what others assumed me to be. Rather, it was who God wanted me to become.

By understanding the psychosocial dynamics of my life, it equipped me with the ability to understand the root of my ministry. It is not formed through only the joyous moments, but the moments of hardship as well—the moments that made me cry, wonder, fight, and pray. By learning to forgive, it enabled me to rebuild my life by understanding God can be and is present in spite of the molestation, rejection, promotion and other milestones.

It was no accident that fascination with the Word of God was identified at an early age in my life. As mentioned several times throughout my spiritual autobiography,

my younger years were intrigued by worship, church and God's Word. Even though my parents were not preachers or pastors, they created a pulpit in our home and preached every day the importance of morals and values that reflect what ministry is all about. When thinking about my current place of ministry, Union Baptist Church is a church whose roots were founded not based on a church split or some other superficial agenda. Established in a two-room complex, where they held Sunday school and Bible study, it had a vision for service to both church and community.

Union Baptist Church has a history of being an agent of change in the community. For many, it was considered the, "Little church with a big heart." Its focus was not only to provide the community with structured church services and Bible studies, but cared about the well being of the community. In an interview with a former member of Union Baptist Church, she explained how the church was the center of the community. It was a place where people belonged. "Union was conscious of its mission to be an agent of change for the community." The church thrived on evangelism and mission as part of its focus to help provide ministry tools that could better the social and psychological needs of the people who surrounded that community. In a sense, the church became the voice of the people.

Dr. A.H. McDaniel was known throughout that community for being a pastor who cared for everyone. Pastor B.F. McDaniel and Dr. Sir Walter L. Mack Jr., were pastors who believed in protecting and bringing awareness to the sociological needs of the community. Ministry was beyond the duty of serving those who were members of Union Baptist Church, but it was about serving all people.

Much like my own life story, the needs of people in the community in which I serve are always a concern. As a teenager, this was evidenced by my involvement in social organizations like the Youth Branch of the NAACP of Johnston County. My service to the community was demonstrated by founding my school's Gospel choir, serving as president of the student body for four years, and gaining popularity among both African-Americans and Caucasians. The choir was comprised of African-Americans, Caucasians, and Hispanics, who wanted nothing but to represent the face of what unity looked like. With the help of others, we wanted to bring awareness to the need for our community to be socially connected and move beyond the racial barriers that separated us. As a leader in my community, serving as a counselor, always checking on my peers and being a voice for those who could not find the courage to speak for them was the norm. In comparison to Union Baptist Church, strong leadership and community involvement was a concept very prevalent in my life. God had situated me in a place where community connection was the "heart beat" of the ministry.

Leading people to a place of spiritual and sociological wholeness was essential to the mission of the church. Similarly, my interest was not just in being a person who only spoke about Christ. My desire was being the agent of change that helped people find their voice in places where they were often told not to speak or were not consciousness of the severity of the issues surrounding them. Just as the leadership at Union Baptist Church strived to provide the community with such support, it is my duty and call to help lead people to wholeness. Leading people to a place of fullness, whether through preaching, counseling or mentoring, has become a central part of my personhood. The same concept of leading people to become whole has been essential for Union Baptist Church as well.

The current dynamics of Union Baptist Church have a strong make-up of programs that center on restoring and empowering people and giving people the opportunity to be leaders. There are programs for the youth adult-centered programs that focus on providing members with rehabilitation support, women and men's fellowships, and the needs of the senior population. However, there seems to be a need to provide leadership training for the youth.

While further examining our efforts to provide a more comprehensive outline and project that is birthed out of the past and the present, it is evident a leadership program for youth is essential and lines up with the mission of the church and the mission of the life of the writer. This research project will provide leadership training for youth to be leaders in a world that rejects, refuses and denies youth access to be who they are called to be. Through my *Spiritual Autobiography*, there was discovery that the real connection and pattern focuses on leadership development. It was not that rejection was experienced, but more importantly, how recovery in order to maximize the potential that was created in me.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL**

In 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed the University of Pennsylvania and made this statement: “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build the youth for the future.” The former president expressed a critical component to ensuring our future is secure. The community must begin training and building youth to become leaders. The survival of any community, country, company or organization is not always based on monetary investments, but rather who is trained to handle the investments. If communities are to expect longevity and sustainability, they must be intentional about developing young people to take their place. This means, creating programs relevant to the needs of youth.

When there are relevant programs that address the needs of a community, the outcome is clear—success. Relevant programming matched with a current issue or concern may produce an outcome that will meet the need of all persons involved. In this case, youth becoming leaders in order to propel communities, governments, and churches into a better place will not only benefit the local community, but can also improve conditions globally as well.

### **Youth Leadership Development Programs Are Essential**

Developing youth to become leaders while using media is a program designed to develop and train youth to be leaders while using media as an aid. The use of media and group-time helps address the needs of a community that is dealing with a variety of issues that have resulted in low graduation rates, high drop-out rates, ineffective communication and problem-solving skills, poor self-development opportunities, distressed health and wellness, and a lack of entrepreneurship. Historically, youth leadership development has been successful. For many, using a post-modern approach to reach youth has been the result of their accomplishments. Furthermore, programs that use a more traditional format to train youth tend to miss the mark because of the lack of relevancy.

In today's society, trendy tools used for youth communication and learning methods is the use of technology and media such as YouTube, film, blogs, texting, and communication programs such as Skype and Facetime. The concept of the project is to use media to develop youth to become leaders by addressing social and self-development issues while allowing them the opportunity to see themselves as more than a child, but also as a leader. By enmeshing an issue with a contemporary method, the expected outcome is students will increase their understanding of leadership and embrace their gifts and talents to be leaders in their communities, schools and churches.

In an article entitled, *Principals for Youth Development*, the author outlines three key components of successful youth development. The first component is by natural process. This simply means the growing capacity of a young person to understand and act on the environment. Because human development is perpetual, it is critical for youth to see themselves as human beings that are forever changing. With this said, optimal

development in youth enables them to live a healthy, satisfying and productive life as youth and later adults.<sup>1</sup> Youth development in this case is simple; youth are forever learning, growing and developing. As the world changes, so do people. Therefore, the natural process is aiding youth to respond to these changes in a way that will build the community and world in which they live. It ultimately depends on how students interpret their situations and how they respond to changes.

It is the job of youth development programs to be relevant and intentional about addressing these needs and to promote healthy interpretations. Secondly, the term youth development has to consist of principals. This means effective programs must have a philosophy or relevant approach that emphasizes active support for the growing capacity of young people by individuals, organizations and institutions, especially at the community level. It is rooted in the commitment to assure all young people perform to their maximum potential.<sup>2</sup> In other words, all youth, regardless of their race or gender, should benefit from a program that causes them to thrive. Hence, if programs present principles that support youth in all areas, then the outcome may consist of youth promoting the talents, gifts, and leadership skills that may transform their communities. The last concept is practice; this simply means how a program is orchestrated. Development takes place when the practice is relevant and orchestrated so that growth may occur.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Hamilton and Mary Agnes Hamilton, *The Youth Development Handbook: Coming of Age in American Communities*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The issue with many youth leadership programs is they lack the use of each of the aforementioned key elements. By excluding these elements, many programs lose effectiveness. This does an extreme injustice for students. The overall goal of any youth development/leadership program is to be intentional in their practice. Furthermore, the approach must mirror the needs of the population. With the concept of using media to teach leadership, the goal is to empower students to use their knowledge and develop their skills while using a method that is familiar to them.

Through this program, our goals are to address the needs of youth and foster an environment that would be conducive to learning. The process will be developed so students will always have room to grow and develop their leadership skills. The practice of the program is to engage students to be leaders. By using these principals, the success of the program may create an environment that can change the face of what youth leadership may become.

The goal of using media to connect students to leadership is to make learning relational. In Efrem Smith's book, *Raising Up Young Heroes*, he discusses the value of developing youth to be leaders. He raises awareness about student leadership and suggests the key to successful youth leadership development is having an environment in which leadership from young people is affirmed.<sup>4</sup> When youth are affirmed to be leaders, they use their gifts to transform others. This type of exchange can result in a community that can increase productivity and decrease some of the negative outcomes due to students' poor choices and judgment when it pertains to life situations.

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<sup>4</sup> Efrem Smith, *Raising Up Young Heroes: Developing a Revolutionary Youth Ministry*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004 ), 77.

## Using Media to Teach Leadership

Film, social networks, texting and other media concepts have changed the way society communicates and has also transformed the manner in which students learn. From shorthand texting to limitation of face-to-face interaction due to programs such as Skype and Facetime, technology has shifted the way people relate to each other. For many, the digital age has made it simple to get a message in less than ten seconds from someone who may be in another state or country. Conversely, the use of technology has had its downfall due to the over use of technology. In spite of the downfalls, the fact remains students can become effective learners through the use of technology and media.

There are several kinds of media outlets youth use in order to communicate and learn. There are computers, social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Socialcam and YouTube. Of course there are electronic devices such as iPads, tablets and other enhanced mobile devices; the media is a pervasive presence in young people's social and cultural experience in young people's social and cultural experience.<sup>5</sup> There is no escaping the reality that media of all forms play a tremendous role in the lives of youth. From television to texting, the use of digital communication is vastly growing. Researchers found the average American child is growing up in a home with three TV's, three CD players, three radios, one video game player and at least one computer.<sup>6</sup> This does not include the devices used at schools.

U.S. researchers calculated youth between eight and eighteen years old spend an average of nearly seven hours a day using a wealth of electronic media (television,

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<sup>5</sup> Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media* (London: Routledge, 2004), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10.

videos, computers and videos games) as well as movies books and magazines.<sup>7</sup> Every aspect of a child's world is now in the arena of technology. The *New York Times* released an article entitled, *If Your Kids Are Awake They Are Probably Online*. This article gave insight on the overuse of media by youth. In an alarming study they had this to say about youth and media use, "Those ages eight to eighteen spend more than seven-and-a-half hours a day with such devices, compared with less than six-and-a-half hours five years ago. That does not count the hour-and-a-half youths spend texting, or the half-hour they talk on their cell phones. Because so many of them are multitasking—say, surfing the Internet while listening to music—they pack on average nearly eleven hours of media content into that seven-and-a-half hours."<sup>8</sup>

In the same article, a study also showed young people's media consumption has rapidly increased in the last five years when compared to 1999 to 2004, as sophisticated mobile technology like iPods and smart phones brought media access into teenager's pockets and beds.<sup>9</sup> This was shocking because many who created the study did not expect such a huge escalation in numbers between the time periods. Needless to say, the consumption of media and technology has moved the world to reconsider how effective media is for youth. If it is a concept that consumes over fifty percent of a child's day, then why have churches and faith based communities failed to utilize these tools to create relational and relevant learning environment for youth. The average teen between the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Stelter "Youth Are Watching, But Less Often On TV," *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2012 <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/09/business/media/young-people-are-watching-but-less-often-on-tv.html?pagewanted=all> (October 22, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

ages of eight and eighteen spends nearly four hours a day in front of a TV screen.<sup>10</sup> In detail, this calculates to twenty-eight hours a week, 102 hours a month and 1,124 hours a year.

As consumption of technology use increases, these methods move beyond personal gratification. Globally, educational settings are using technology and media. Frances Jacobson's article, *Challenges to Teaching Credibility Assessment in Contemporary Schools Settings*, suggests Internet use for school learning has increased by forty-five percent. This includes usage for instructional purposes such as presentations, homework and tests.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, a survey of K-12 teachers affirmed the use of media and social networking. A majority of teachers are using digital media, with applications including instruction, lesson planning, communications and professional development. The conclusion of the report praised the use of computers, movies, and digital visuals resulting in the following conclusion:

a) Teachers use digital media value it and believe it helps them—and their students—be more effective. b) Teachers continue to use video, but they increasingly access video online, rather than from broadcast, cable or videotape. Teachers are becoming more strategic in their media use and shrewd when it comes to integrating it into their repertoire of instructional strategies and resources. c) Teachers value many different types of digital media, with games and activities for student use in school topping the list. d) Increasing numbers of teachers are joining virtual professional communities—and

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<sup>10</sup> Dowshen, MD, Steven. *KidsHealth-The Web's most visited site about children's health*. Kids Health (December 1, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Miriam J Metzger and Andrew J. Flanagin, *Digital Media, Youth, and Credibility* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) 167.

many are comfortable using social networking tools in their personal and professional lives.<sup>12</sup>

The article further confirms the use of devices and affirms that learning should be universal and familiar. If students spend time learning outside of school with digital media, then why not use the same method for school? Using familiar methods that are relevant to the daily lives of students increases productivity and learning, according to Jacobson's article. In an age where digital use is popular, it is fitting to merge these methods and practices in a school environment. Therefore, if it is a concept being used in school that has been proven to enhance and improve the learning experience with positive outcomes, it would be ideal to use the same approach in faith-based communities or in youth leadership development.

In 1993, MIT Media Lab created a program entitled, The Computer Clubhouse. The program was started after designers noticed youth found interest in learning how to make robots, graphic designs, and animation at MIT's Computer Museum. The interest of these youth increased and resulted in creating a program where students can enhance their learning through technology. The idea of The Computer Clubhouse was to support learning through design experiences, help youth build on their own interest, cultivate and emergent community of learners, and create an environment of respect and trust.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the organization's goals were to create a program that used technology to help aid in positive responses in school and life. With much success, the program has

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<sup>12</sup> Dando, Kevin, and Kristen Plemon, "PBS Teachers | Resources For The Classroom." *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service* <http://pbs.org/teachers> (November 12, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Yasmin B. Kafai, Kylie A. Peppler, and Robbin N. Chapman, *The Computer Clubhouse: Constructionism and Creativity in Youth Communities*, (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2009), 5.



produced over ninety-percent of its sites in urban communities, giving underprivileged youth a chance to explore new learning possibilities. Many of the students who are involved would not have had this opportunity if it were not for The Computer Clubhouse.

The concept of using digital media to train youth to be leaders means creating a method familiar to the youth in order to increase self-esteem, develop leadership skills, and improve the productivity of youth at home, school and their personal life. Through The Computer Clubhouse, students learned the value of teamwork, how to effectively communicate, and other life applications. The Computer Clubhouse Model understood the idea of using technology to teach and train youth. The program's idea coincides with the proposed project: give youth the opportunity to use digital devices and programs to learn and to become leaders. The key to The Computer Clubhouse is they took the initiative to invest in student's interest in technology. Overall, the success of the program did not only result from the numbers of students that participated, but it credits their success to their method of digital media to enhance learning.

In retrospect to their approach, their limited outreach to low income, Anglo-Saxon communities is questionable. Many urban communities may not have had the opportunities as others; however, there is a need to reach Anglo-Saxon communities that have limited access to technology devices. Did the program reach out to these communities? What expansion do they have in order to reach beyond African-American, Hispanic, and Native American communities? As mentioned previously, successful youth development programs are inclusive in their approach.

There are many who argue the use of technology does not enhance learning. In an article titled, *The Main Model: A Heuristic Approach to Understanding Technology*

*Effects on Credibility*, the author argues technology does not enhance learning, education or personal development. The argument statement is, “New technology such as blogs are too partisan, narrow or both. Many programs develop media that dazzle but fail to provide sustainable content. Furthermore, the web and many other digital technologies carry content that is truly gargantuan in scope. As a result, youth are likely to be overwhelmed by both the technology itself and the enormous amount of content it delivers.”<sup>14</sup>

Considering this statement, my argument is technology can be overwhelming, but for whom? If youth are being raised to use technology, adults should consider the method as a cultural norm. As previously mentioned, youth consume at least fifty-percent of their time using digital media and technology based programs. If youth are accustomed to the multiple use of technology, then how can it be overwhelming or underutilized? Furthermore, the underutilizing concepts are prevalent when technology is ignored as a teaching tool for youth. If youth best absorb information from viewing YouTube clips, films, or from the use of computer programs, the issue is not about if the information is overwhelming, but rather is the information accurate.

In a similar article, Dr. Atsusi Hirumai argues it is how the technology is used and integrated with instruction that makes the difference, not the technology used to deliver or others who facilitate the instruction.<sup>15</sup> In other words, computers, Internet, YouTube or concepts are not the cause of youth to learn, but it is how one uses it that makes the difference. His defense concludes from a study conducted where they tested

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<sup>14</sup> Metzger and Flanagin, “Digital Media,” 77.

<sup>15</sup> Atsusi Hirumi, Ph.D., "Does the Use of Technology Improve Learning? The Answer Lies in Design." *McGraw Hill Education*. <https://mhonline.com> (Nov18,2012).

computer-based instruction and computer-based training in comparison to traditional face-to-face instruction. The outcome resulted in no significant difference in achievement.<sup>16</sup> The results showed that exam scores and comprehension of topics increased. The positive effects had nothing to do with the tools, but rather how the tools were used. With this finding the research concludes, “Media are mere vehicles that deliver instruction but do not influence student achievement any more than the truck that delivers our groceries causes change in our nutrition.”<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to this argument, other research suggests there is considerable evidence technology does improve influence by: addressing the students and teach media preference, interfacing content and learners, creating a context for communications, offering an alternative way to produce store, present and distribute information, enhance motivation, attention, perception and petition, and providing models, symbolic representations, interactivity, cueing and vicarious experience.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the concept of technique is only one aspect that contributes to the success of the use of technology to increase learning for youth; however, it is essential the capabilities of the product be considered as an attribute of its success too. Leaders can have great teaching techniques, but if they do not have the right vehicle to deliver the message, the concept may be ineffective.

Correlating with the overall process of the proposed project, technology and media use will be the vehicle to help carry the message of empowerment that will aid

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 3.

students to embrace leadership as a lifestyle. It is the purpose of this program to use a post-modern approach to reach a generation of youth who have been disconnected from their potential. Research gives a guideline of how learning and technology go together. If technology is familiar for students, those who are tasked to teach students should consider embracing the concept of using technology to teach. In other words, if classrooms and community-based programs have adopted the theory that technology impacts learning, then faith-based communities should consider the same concept. Why should they consider this concept? What benefits would they accrue? The research has shown students who use technology not only increase their learning but embrace the idea of learning because technology is familiar.

#### Using Film in Faith-Based Communities-Another Approach

The use of film or movies to teach leadership skills to youth is another concept to consider. Just like social media, using film to teach faith and leadership has had critique. In Edward McNulty's book, *Faith and Film for Leaders*, he expresses film can influence young people to move towards a self-understanding, exhibit values of the young, supply dreams and articulate life goals. Films can contribute greatly to mental and spiritual growth by telling stories of people facing crises of ethics and faith similar to their own.<sup>19</sup> In other words, people begin to see themselves as the characters. The viewer and the film connect, presenting a reality that is familiar.

Youth become linked because what they see on film conveys to their personal lives. When youth personalize these characters and the outcome of their situation is

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<sup>19</sup> Edward McNulty, *Faith and Film: A Guidebook for Leaders*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 89.

favorable, this allows them to see their lives as having a similar outcome. G. Williams Jones refers to this as giving students a “wider verizon” for their life situations.<sup>20</sup> In Jones’s book, *Sunday Night At The Movies*, he offers practical reasons why the church should be involved in film interpretation. In his argument, he believes faith communities should not exclude film interpretation. His view is based on the idea that the context of many films is based on the everyday life of people who go to the movies to be entertained by film. Thus, the interpretation of the film becomes reality and relational concept. The argument I pose is based on the premise of the outcome of characters. Agreeable enough, the idea to be engulfed with the character is normal. However, how is one to view a character that dies, commits a crime or unlawful act that is praised and considered honorable? How do you address this outcome from moral and ethical perceptions? For youth, this can skew their understanding of reality, thus resulting in acts of similar crime. This is when adults or youth workers should be deliberate in approaching this issue with clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Students should not leave film viewing prepared to be terrorist, considering suicide as an option, or leave confirming bullying behavior. Rather, youth workers should invite dialogue that promotes change and alternative solutions to their situations. This is how film can be a positive avenue for teaching youth about leadership.

Contrasting this method, Ron Luce, the author of *Battle Cry for A Generation: The Fight to Save Youth’s America* suggests the enemy that we fight that is destroying our youth is that of film and media. He believes the use of television, Internet, and video games are the root to the issues with our youth. Consequently, the mass use of media

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<sup>20</sup> William G. Jones, *Sunday Night at the Movies*, (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 113.

sweeping across our youth, have created a barrier and disconnect from reality, he argues. He refers to these devices as the “enemy to our youth.” His defense is television is filled with violence, sex and alcohol, video games encourage violent crimes and behavior, and the Internet is overloaded with information that is inappropriate for youth.

While this may be true, there must be an effort to present students with the reality of life. Sheltering them from these experiences may result in them interpreting their own life as shameful. The last thing youth development programs should do is cause shame. Rather, programs should offer solutions and not stumbling blocks to students—embracing their potential to be effective leaders.

In conclusion, there is need for youth development in communities. With issues such as bullying, teen pregnancy, obesity and high school dropouts, someone should be posing the question, what can we do? How can communities, schools, and faith-based organizations address issues that center around these often lived realities of students? On a global aspect, what ways can government policy help transform these situations to be just story lines on films and not lifestyles for our youth? There must be an investment of time, and training that can encourage youth to be leaders and consider alternatives to lifestyles that lead to self-destruction. These programs must be relational and relevant for this generation of youth. An approach that is relational would consist of using media and technology as tools to teach leadership. The success of this method is evident. Schools and community-based organizations have embraced the idea of technology and have seen remarkable results in attitudes, self-awareness, increase of test scores and most of all, altering youth’s perspective of their future.

This program's goal is to provide youth an understanding of what leadership is, how to embrace leadership and to address current issues in youth culture. By utilizing media as a vehicle to this program, our projection is youth will not only participate, but consider themselves leaders and change the community in which they live.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

#### **Theological**

Liberation theology can be described as a movement or awareness that targets the side of those who are socialized, marginalized and oppressed. There are different faces of liberation such as feminist liberation, black liberation, and even liberation for persons who are deaf. The main focus and goal of these classifications is to not only cause awareness of such social strains and spiritual bondages, but also allow the awareness to trigger a call to action and response. The call to action is for those who hear the call to be the voice of those who have been silenced by the oppressive forces of those in hierarchical control. It is through liberation theology cultures and society transition from victimization to becoming an agent of change within their faith and community. They introduce those persons to a life of freedom and liberation. Therefore, this transformative measure becomes a contagious concept that transmits to others, leading them to life of equality and justice.

Liberation theology speaks of God as a force that is on the side of the poor. By definition, it has been defined as release from a form of captivity into freedom. It is a theological image for Christian salvation as release from the captivity of sin to the



freedom given in Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> With liberation theology, it is understood as “a movement in which one sees the gospel as liberation from all forms of oppression – economic, spiritual, political and social. The emphasis is on praxis, or the practical ways in which God’s call for liberation for the oppressed is accomplished.”<sup>2</sup> Even though liberation theology begins with recognizing there is an issue that has to be addressed, it must also be the vehicle that mobilizes social and economic freedom for those who are oppressed. In other words, liberation theology must include action, movement and a call to change. Rebecca S. Chopp and Ethna Regan echo this by suggesting, “Liberation theology is a critique of the structures and institutions that create the poor, including the primary identification of modern Christianity with the rich. Liberation theology engages in dialogue not only with philosophy but also with social science...the image of human existence in liberation theology is the poor.”<sup>3</sup>

With its roots deeply grown in the Latin American community, many contemporary writers have constructed different angles of liberation theology. These voices have allowed people to transcend beyond cultural marginalization. Such a concept has created an emerging reality that God is on the side of those who have been dismissed due to separation methodologies such as socialism, classism and sexism. However, the solution for oppression is to consider how Christ was on the side of the poor. Jesus Christ’s position was to “set the captives free,” however it is important to consider what

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<sup>1</sup> Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster Jon Knox Press, 1996), 160.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca S. Chopp and Ethna Regan, *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918 Latin American Liberation Theology*, (Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 471.

were they being freed from. In Gutierrez's writing, he gives definition of what bondages Christ may have considered unjust and what it is that has people in bondage by the oppressor. He explains,

The first being "real poverty" or what can be defined as material poverty. In definition, this means the lack of those goods required to satisfy the most basic needs of human beings. The poverty is an outrage in its terms of the message of the Bible. It is a situation wholly contrary to the will of God. In other words, the obscurity of being denied of basic needs is a way of oppression and serves as means of having physical and psychological oppression over people. The second, being spiritual poverty. By definition, this is not primarily the putting aside of worldly goods, it is rather an attitude of openness and acceptance towards the will of God. The gospel also calls this spiritual childhood, of which the renunciation of worldly goods is a consequence. Then there is the poverty as commitment to be assumed by all Christians, which expresses itself in solidarity with the poor and in protest against poverty. Jesus assumes the sin of humanity in this way, both out of love for the sinner and in rejection of sin."<sup>4</sup>

This definition creates a lens that gives sight to understanding the seriousness and importance of liberation theology in its praxis. The call to liberation is to consider the voice of those who need liberation. In understanding the problem and issue at hand, the church and community can lean towards a workable outcome to overcome such prejudice and oppression. When liberation occurs, change occurs economically, communally and socially. Freedom and equality is not only an aim for liberation theology it is the foundation in which the oppressed are freed and justice rolls like a mighty stream. Without liberation, the oppressed stay oppressed and the oppressor remains in power. Oppression is a gate that keeps people poor, marginalized, socialized and excommunicated. However, when the oppressed are given hope, it transforms belief and

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<sup>4</sup> G.Gutierrez, *The Task and Content of Liberation Theology*, trans. Judith Condor (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University, 1999), 26.

transpires a reality that most likely reflects the vision of God. Boff echoes Gutierrez's hope for the oppressed when he states,

The poor can break out of their situation of oppression only by working out a strategy better able to change social conditions: the strategy of liberation. Thus giving way to the definition that liberation, the oppressed come together, come to understand their situation through the processes of conscientization, discover the cause of their oppression, organize themselves into movement, and act in a coordinated fashion.<sup>5</sup>

Such strategies seem simple, however it is far from simple but complex, especially when there are forces that outnumber and out-strategize the oppressed. Therefore, it is important to pose this question, where is God when oppression is present? If God is present and just, how can there be oppression? Boff's challenge to those who are not oppressed is to consider liberation theology in this light,

Liberation theology is listening to the cry of the oppressed. God is the God of the cry of the victim of injustice. God hears the cry. A theology deaf to the poor weeping for their innocent suffering is also dumb before God and before society. A theology which is dumb before the oppression of the majority, finds it hard to escape charges of cynicism and triviality.<sup>6</sup>

As a community, there must not be deaf ears, but a charge for change is essential to overcome such prejudices. To move beyond deaf ears, Robert McAfee argues and states the content of good news of liberation is to consider these three structures only,

The first emphasis in liberation theology is liberation from unjust social structures that destroy people. This means both political or economical or cultural. The second is the liberation from the power of fate, from the sense that one's state in life is foreordained and that there is nothing one can do about it. Last, the liberation from

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<sup>5</sup> Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introduction to Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro eds., *The Future of Liberation Theology, Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutierrez* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989), 49.

personal sin and guilt...This is the reality of gratuitousness of grace.<sup>7</sup>

Boff suggests McAfee's emphasis is relevant but it cannot be the only structures. Rather, if liberation is going to be liberation, then before beginning a movement...the second word is liberation, but the basic word is practice<sup>8</sup>...

As mentioned before, liberation deals with the oppression of the poor and socially marginalized. Liberation can also be found in many strata of society such as young children, juveniles, indigenous people, the underemployed and unemployed, the marginalized, person living in overcrowded urban slums and the elderly.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, the lens of oppression and liberation is wider than just the poor, but rather it must be consider multiple categories in order to fully participate in liberating the disenfranchised.

On the other hand, Anne Wimberly, a leading feminine voice in the twenty-first-century speaks about liberation in a framework for youth, vocation, and the African-American community. She explains, "...African Americans often tell of a deep inner yearning. This deep inner yearning is their souls' search for liberation and vocation. Globally, their deep inner yearning for liberation is the desire to experience themselves as whole or moving toward wholeness."<sup>10</sup> However, in a content Wimberly is referring to linking our soul stories our experiences, and our pains to liberation. It is through our

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<sup>7</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993), 61-62.

<sup>8</sup> Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Liberation Theology: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row: 1986), 61.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>10</sup> Anne Streaty Wimberly, *Soul Stories, African American Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 20.

stories we can be liberated, however, the setting and space must be scarred enough where the setting, the church, the people involved are not oppressors, but rather a tool for liberation. They become tools that cause connection and freedom from the oppression of non-community and the sense of not belonging. Even though Boff considers liberation from the Latin American view, it is parallel to Wimberly's thought of the church/community involvement. The church should be the community of faithful living in comraderie relationships of sharing, love and service."<sup>11</sup>

Wimberly explains people want to be free both spiritually, economically, educationally and vocationally. When forces oppose these freedoms, many feel they are not liberated but rather oppressed. As Boff and Gutierrez focus on the Latin American view of liberation, for African-American's Wimberly believes the liberation process is a multidimensional process that does not stop. Rather, based on her research, consideration should be given to the eight dimensions of liberation. First, is the dimension that involves "knowing one's life as gift and oneself as valued human rather than being shackled by how society or anyone else's sees you."<sup>12</sup> This consideration involves understating the Imago Dei or the image of God.<sup>13</sup> "This is speaks to knowing that in the image of God and the shackles of society (racism, sexism, classism) do not align. Rather, to identify oneself as liberated is to identify with God...to those the value that God sees in oneself and to disregard anything else, but recognizing that opposite forces do exist."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Boff and Boff, *Introduction to Liberation Theology*, 59.

<sup>12</sup> Anne Streaty Wimberly, 24.

<sup>13</sup> Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 137.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

Dimension two consists of assuring that all God's children have the necessity in life. To have the necessity means we can survive in the world and with the world. The inability to have the necessity means that I am not free; I am bound and cannot be a contributor to society.<sup>15</sup>

“Dimension three is to be equal participants and beneficiaries in the political, occupation, education, residential, health care and civic systems of the community and nation...this liberation from human disenfranchisement to human enfranchisement.”<sup>16</sup> This is similar to dimension two, but it focuses on being a part of the world system in order to improve, empower and initiate change.

Dimension four speaks to that persons experience of being respectful and giving just treatment to and by others including family friends and others...we may refer to this activity as liberation from denigration and dehumanization to positive human valuing or positive regard from others.<sup>17</sup>

“Dimension five is where liberated people can see possibilities of breaking out of narrow boundaries of thoughts, knowledge, feelings and limited beliefs in the self ability to act.”<sup>18</sup>

Dimension six and seven go hand in hand because they both deal with the concept of story sharing and telling. Six deals with liberated people recognizing the need to share themselves and their stories with another and seven focuses on sharing the story of how

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

God changed them and the liberation is freedom to do God's work and freedom to share the Good News."<sup>19</sup>

The Eighth Dimension states, "...persons are not fully liberated until they become aware of other's needs for liberation and accept as obligatory their reasonability for contribution to the liberation of others."<sup>20</sup>

These levels or dimensions prepare the oppressed to consider a world where they are contributors to the kingdom of God. For many, the belief is those who are oppressed cannot and are not contributors to society or to the kingdom of God. However, with these dimensions, liberation is about wholeness and contribution. Furthermore, when people are liberated, they use their stories, past pain, history and the Bible to help offer liberation to others. In this case, liberation is about seeking freedom to be in the image of God. It is about shaping the soul from its past pain to the present freedom. When people understand they matter and so do their stories, Wimberley suggest that liberation is not only experienced but it is a reality that cannot be denied.

On the other hand, this project gleans from the thought of James Cone, another leading theologian and the originator of the theory of Black Theology. Cone's perception of theology is Jesus has always been on the side of the oppressed. Cone seeks to find hope, truth and liberation for those who have been oppressed by the emancipation of slavery. "Black Theology is the story of black people's struggle for liberation in an extreme situation of oppression."<sup>21</sup> Through his experience in the black church and its

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>21</sup> James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 49.

teachings, he insists theology has to arise out of an oppressed community as they seek to understand their place in the history of salvation.<sup>22</sup> Black liberation theology serves as a lens for the black experience and the oppression of white America on blacks as it pertains to social, political, and economical equality. The National Committee of Black Churchmen in 1969 defines Black Theology as,

A theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the black condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievements of black humanity. Black theology is a theology of 'blackness.' It is the affirmation of black humanity that emancipates black people from White racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and black people. It affirms the humanity of white people in that it says 'No' to the encroachment of white oppression.<sup>23</sup>

According to Cone, white America used religion to keep blacks in these barricades of bondage and oppression. In Cone's book, *Speaking the Truth*, he suggested, "...religion has served as an opiate, a tranquilizer to make the poor quiet and content with their poverty."<sup>24</sup> Yet, resulting in a community that disregards their true value and uses religion of white America to justify the continuation of their oppressed state. Christian theology according to Cone is,

The language about the liberating character of God's presence in Jesus Christ as He calls his people into being for freedom in the world. The task of the theologian as member of the people of God is to clarify what the Church believes and does in relation to its participation in God's liberating work in the world. In this work,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>23</sup> James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, eds., *Black Theology: A Documentary History, Volume One: 1966-1979* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 101.

<sup>24</sup> James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 74.



the theologian acts in the role of exegete, prophet, teacher, preacher and philosopher.<sup>25</sup>

It is through these experiences that freedom, wholeness, and oneness can be experienced for African-Americans, who in the content of James Cone is the oppressed. Cone argues that like white American theology, black thought on Christian theology has been influenced by Christian context.<sup>26</sup> In further discussion, Cone considers Christian theology according to DeWolf and Tillich's as important but their identity in America does not reflect the overall view of oppression. According to Cone, "Their early work on liberation and stance on civil rights demonstrate justice, however the concern is the influence of culture and the task is oblique. They were prevented from regarding the political suffering of black people as critical evidence for the shaping of their theological perspectives."<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore because white theologians live in a society that is racist, the oppression of black people does not occupy an important line on their theological agenda. Therefore, the need of Black Liberation Theology is essential and helps shape freedom and creates space for blacks. So why is black liberation theology so important? Cone believes,

Black Theology's purpose is to analyze the nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the light of oppressed blacks so they will see the gospel as inseparable from their humiliated condition, and as bestowing on them the necessary power to break the chains of oppression. This means that it is a theology of and for the black

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 47.

community, seeking to interpret the religious dimensions of the forces of liberation in that community.<sup>28</sup>

The black church must work towards contributing to liberation. Cone believes the church's quest is to bear witness to Christ's Lordship not only in preaching about justice, but also in being the agent for its implementation in society.<sup>29</sup>

In Cone's quest to examine Black Liberation Theology, he considers Christian Faith and political praxis, with special reference to those who are oppressed, the oppressors and the church's responsibility to its call and action. In Cone's defense, "Faith is the essential and is a religious term that expresses a person's commitment to the ultimate."<sup>30</sup> Cone considers Paul Tillich's definition of faith as a "total centered act of the personal self, the act of unconditional, infinite and ultimate concern."<sup>31</sup> He has connected faith and the Christ as a complete unit. In other words, to have faith is to have faith that Jesus Christ is the liberator and one who sets the captives free. Even more, the biblical framework has always been on the side of the oppressed and God's liberating power to set the captives free from economic and political oppression.<sup>32</sup> From the recoding of Exod. 19:4-6 and Amos 5:21-24, Cone connects God as the ultimate liberator and the praxis of faith is seen through the lens of these stories. Faith then becomes the praxis...Faith is nothing but trust in the One who comes in Christ for liberation...<sup>33</sup> As

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<sup>28</sup> James H. Cone, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 5.

<sup>29</sup> James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 123.

<sup>30</sup> Brian Mahan and L. Dale Richesin, *The Challenges of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981), 56.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 57.

mentioned before, Cone believes the experiences of the oppressed is essential to social theory and practice. It is through the experience that black liberation, faith, social theory and praxis bring hope for the oppressed. However, Robin W. Lovin argues Cone's point on social theory. She believes making social theory a guide to action means you may be stuck with the results when social theory leads to inaction.<sup>34</sup> She uses the Coleman Report during 1964 and 1974, which gave proof that desegregation of education produced results. Thus we could argue that it was not only just, but it was sociologically sound.<sup>35</sup> Her point is simple; there must be a level of caution when allowing social theory and practice to guide the actions of liberation, faith and praxis. In addition, alongside social theory, she believes that a public social ethics to balance Christian Faith and Christian praxis is essential and a mandate.

Cone would debate Lovin's argument about social theory and praxis. Rather than dismiss the experience, Cone believes the experience is what brings Christian Faith and liberation alive. The inaction comes when we allow faith to fall. That is the importance of the church to continue to practice such movement. This is what we have when we consider God's grace. God's grace can be connected as the power that throws us into the struggle for freedom before we are consciously aware of its connection with faith.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, faith and praxis produce hope. Hope produces life and gives liberation permission to access our world. Social action and theory is perpetual, as long as there is

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 67.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 61.

faith. Faith keeps social theory and action alive because it gives hope. Without hope there is no freedom.

With youth and the idea of leadership and technology, liberation is at the forefront of their agenda. Even though youth may not use the term liberation verbally, their action speaks differently. Black Liberation Theology for youth assures them that God is on their side. With the statistical data that shows youth struggle with bullying, peer pressure, education and other aspects of life, the need for hope and assurance of God is essential. The concept of Black liberation/liberation is two fold with this project. First, liberation as described with Cone and Wimberly, provides a platform to belong. When youth discover they belong, positivity and productivity is the outcome. Young people's quest is to find their space in the community, ministry, and in society. Through effective programming the post-modern generation can connect and find their space among the oppressors. For young people, this can be the foundation that improves our world, our churches and community. In a day where youth are leaving ministries world wide, there has to be a call to action. Liberation to youth means contribution. However, how can they contribute if they are unaware of what they have to contribute? Ultimately, leadership and learning about leadership creates a liberating environment and a sense of belonging.

Secondly, technology is the gateway of liberation. With technology, youth become connected in their own world in which they matter. In the post-modern generation, technology is liberation. Where society has failed to teach, education, encourage, empower, inform and support youth, social media and other community sites provide this type of support. In another light, the use of technology as a tool to teach leadership becomes a gateway of hope and security for the future. Therefore, the idea of

oppression, social theory at a stand still, and dehumanization can be unraveled through the lens of youth. A youth that is liberated is a youth that is justified and free. Free to see themselves as the image of God and freedom to be the agent of change the community needs. It is up to the church and the community at large to be the force that not only preaches about liberation but there must be a call to action.

### **Biblical Foundations**

The two scriptures exegeted in this biblical foundation are Jer. 1: 4-19 and 1 Tim. 4:11-17. These two scriptures elucidate the biblical foundational work of this project.

#### **Old Testament**

The book of Jeremiah is the longest book of the Old Testament. Unlike the book of Isaiah, which contains several works of different prophets, Jeremiah is the only identified author in this book. A book built by documents of historical and biographical information, Jeremiah also presents his personal testimonies and lamentations about his call and life struggles. The complexity of the book contains three kinds of material: poetic oracles, conventionally designed narratives about Jeremiah and sermonistic prose passages that bear a strong resemblance to Deuteronomistic style.<sup>37</sup> Many scholars regard the whole book as a reliable witness to the words and life of Jeremiah. Weaved with religious themes and worship, the book of Jeremiah can also be identified as a book of prayers and petitions to bring the land back to the place of God.

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<sup>37</sup>Joseph John Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 334.

Born into a family of leadership, Jeremiah was not only ordained from birth to be a leader, but his family lineage also links him to be ordained to be a priestly leader. He is known as the “weeping” prophet, because of his lamentations throughout his writings that longed for the day in which the people of Jerusalem will return back to God. His life was a living sermon, and his collections of prayers, prophecies, and oracles give the reader an understanding of the heart of the matter as it pertains to Jeremiah’s connection to the people.

In the first chapter of Jeremiah, it is clear he is being called by God to do ministry. Like Moses, Samuel and other figures, God called Jeremiah to lead the people back to God. This entire first chapter of Jeremiah is designated for his call into ministry and into leadership. The story of the call of Jeremiah presents several key points: A call, a response, instructions, ordination and empowerment. The call is clear—God has designated this young boy to be in leadership and in ministry.

God speaks to Jeremiah in a predestination format by replying that his call was ordained before conception and that he was consecrated or set apart before he was born. This language of election is presented throughout the Bible. For example, the “Servant of the Lord” in Isa. 40-55 is “formed in the womb” and is called before he was born to be a great leader. The question that can be posed is what did Yahweh know about Jeremiah? If God is all-knowing, all-doing and all-wise, one may interpret that God knew this boy or child would have faults, good intentions, make bad decisions, and even wise decisions. However, this was no reason, according to Yahweh, that he was not the ideal candidate to lead the people back to God. When we examine the word “consecration,” we see God was doing setting Jeremiah apart, dedicating or sanctifying him to the sacred purpose of

service and worship to God.<sup>38</sup> This act of consecration was done before Jeremiah was born. The consecration was identifying him as not only to be born into priestly role, but also that he was born to do the work of God. In Hebrew the word, “consecrate” means to “fill the hand.”<sup>39</sup> It can be assumed that was exactly what Yahweh was doing, filling Jeremiah’s hands with the authority to rule with an iron fist and speak to nations and cause them to obey.

Further examining the call of the leader Jeremiah, God also refers to him as a prophet to the nations. The lineage of Jeremiah foresees him as a priest; however, to be called a prophet to the nations is another level of authority and leadership. Prophets in the Old Testament were popular in population but not in practice. Divine inspiration was what made a person a prophet, what caused the prophet to speak out, and what made others listen to the prophet as a legitimate spokesperson for the Divine or Yahweh.<sup>40</sup> In other words, a prophet was one who can speak in the name of God or Yahweh. Often, they would speak to crowds and kingdoms, but they were especially found speaking to kings and priests about the promises of God. They were inspired to speak predictions about events and to warn people to remain faithful and loyal to God. John Barton better describes prophets as people who are raised up by God to monitor his people’s progress or decline in obedience, and to strive to keep the nation on the course originally intended

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<sup>38</sup> Arthur George Buttrick, *The Interpreter's dictionary of the Bible: An illustrated encyclopedia identifying and explaining all proper names and significant terms and subjects in the Holy Scriptures including the Apocrypha* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press), 667.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Noel David Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 482.

by God.<sup>41</sup> Jeremiah's task was major. His role was more than his priestly duties. He would be the one to speak truth to people who may not want to hear it. However, God has commissioned, consecrated and appointed him to be a prophet to the nations and bring restoration and originality back to the land in which God had chosen.

After Jeremiah's official ordination service, he responds to Yahweh. His response is not yes, but rather, he responds with uncertainty about his ability to be the person God has ordained or called him to be. On one hand it can be interpreted as humility, but on the other, disobedience. Jeremiah's focus is shifted not on the promises of God, but rather on his inability, flaws, and possibly inexperience of doing the work of God. His response is clear, "Ah, Lord God! Truly, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy."<sup>42</sup>

Jeremiah automatically considers his role in society as a boy who may not have much experience. Considering youth in the Old Testament, they were noted as Yahweh's greatest gift and covenant with Israel. Children were vital to worship, prayer and rituals in the Old Testament.<sup>43</sup> A child was the sign of longevity of families. The ideal of fertility and births were signs of miracles. So, maybe Jeremiah's concern was about the powerless position of children in ancient society? Maybe his concern was that parents had majority rule over children, consequently, leaving minimal or no rule for the child. It would be unc customary for a child, or in Jeremiah's case, a teenage boy to have the power to not only rule over people but to be a prophet to the nations. The Levitical Law reinforced

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<sup>41</sup> R. J. Coggins, and J. L. Houlden, *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London, England: SCM Press, 1990), 556.

<sup>42</sup> Coogan Michael, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal, Deuterocanonical Books: with the Apocryphal*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1075.

<sup>43</sup> Freedman, David Noel, "The Anchor Bible Dictionary" (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 905.



strong parental authority, so how was he going to be in a place of authority over his parents, his grandmother, aunts or uncles? Not only that, he considers his age and lack of experience a hindrance, therefore, resulting in this conversation about his speaking ability. He only recalls the sermons by his father, Hilkiah the priest. To him, his interpretations will not be as sharp as other rulers. Jeremiah's response is very similar to Moses in Exodus, when God calls him. Moses responds to God about his inability to speak and Solomon refers to his youth as a hindrance to the call of Yahweh.

Just as God responded to Moses and Solomon, God's response to Jeremiah is similar, "I will give you the words to say and you shall go where I send." What Jeremiah forgets is that in verse four of the text, Yahweh has informed him that the complexity of his genetic make up is understood and his interpretation of his DNA has identified him as fit for the job. It was the intention of God for Jeremiah to go and the promise was God's protection and direction for his life. There is assurance of divine help by God for Jeremiah. Jeremiah could not negotiate with God. His excuses did not matter—the only thing God was concerned about was His promises being fulfilled to the people.

Significantly, the consecration service is sealed with a touch of God's hand to Jeremiah's mouth. At this point, the hand of God has inserted the word of God into the mouth, heart, and mind of this young prophet. Again, Yahweh provides a prophetic message to Jeremiah about his assignment. Jeremiah is to pluck, pull down, destroy and overthrow the old, build and plant new places.

The seal of Jeremiah's call leads to a two-part question regarding his role in leadership. It has been suggested the two-part vision occurred some time after his initial

call into ministry.<sup>44</sup> Yahweh asked him twice about what he sees. In the first vision, Jeremiah sees a branch of an almond tree. In ancient Biblical texts, the almond tree served a variety of purposes. In Gen. 30:37, Jacob used rods of almond in his plan against Laban.<sup>45</sup> Aaron's rod produced ripe almonds in Num. 17:8, signifying he was divinely chosen. Purposefully, Yahweh uses the almond tree and commends Jeremiah on what he sees.

However, in the second vision, Jeremiah sees a boiling pot tilting away from the north. This vision foreshadows the dangerous force that will descend in a military assault in verse fourteen through sixteen of this particular chapter. Jeremiah must be prepared to fight this political revolt. Unlike Judah, Jeremiah's enemies originate from the inside of the boundaries.<sup>46</sup> Those that are in charge and have authority will become defensive, as their powers will be plucked, destroyed, pulled down and overthrown. The way of Yahweh will be restored and Jeremiah must proclaim this prophecy.

This prophecy is concluded with final leadership instructions for Jeremiah. It is clear and obvious Yahweh understands that such a task can be intimidating, scary and utterly frightening. Nevertheless, the command is clear: gird your loins, stand up and tell everything that Yahweh has commanded.<sup>47</sup> Jeremiah must use his speech training he received in verse nine and tell the people what Yahweh has spoken. Yet, Jeremiah is not fearful, because the walls of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah will fall. Because Judah

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<sup>44</sup> John Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), 196.

<sup>45</sup> Coogin, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 53.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 1076.

has forsaken God, Jeremiah will become the new fortified city.<sup>48</sup> Not only that, Jeremiah's leadership and obedience to God will make him an iron pillar and a bronze wall against the whole nations. What is interesting is that Jeremiah is referred to as two elements, iron and bronze and then two separate objects, a pillar and a wall. Iron is a metal whose hardness and malleability made it ideal for implements of war as well as of more peaceful pursuits.<sup>49</sup> Iron represented strength and toughness. Walls were typically built to protect and limit entrances. Height and depth of walls varied according to their purpose such as for the use of homes or to be built around a city. Bronze, on the other hand, replaced copper and was found useful in the production of metal weapons, tools and jewelry around 2000-1500 BC.<sup>50</sup> The metal was hard in texture but also had a smooth bright surface. In its link with pillars, they were known to be symbols of strength or support.<sup>51</sup> It has been made very clear to this inexperienced youth that has questions about his ability to be in leadership, there lies in him the ability to be strong like bronze and iron and a protector of the promises of Yahweh like a wall and a pillar. His strength has been personified as a means to obey.

Jeremiah may have been young, but he was ready to do the work of Yahweh. His characteristics were greater than what was thought of him. His excuses were no match to God. Even before he was born, Jeremiah was set apart to do the work of the Lord.

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<sup>48</sup> John M. Bracke, "The Words and The Word of God." *Jeremiah 1-29* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 23.

<sup>49</sup> Allan Mark Powell and Barry L. Bandstra, *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*. Rev. & updated; 3rd ed. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2011), 455.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 858.

Regardless of his age, God was simply looking for someone who was willing to go, speak the truth, and trust the power of God during the journey.

New Testament-I Timothy 4:11-17

The position of leadership in antiquity was considered challenging and rewarding. Those who follow Jesus experienced moments of excitement as they watched Him perform miracles, signs and wonders. However, the challenges many faced were the doubt and conflict that the presence of Jesus caused in towns and villages. From healing on the Sabbath to touching unclean spirits, Jesus often put himself and others in compromising positions that challenged status quo. Nevertheless, those who were surrounded by Jesus understood he was in the business of saving souls and establishing leaders to do the work with or without them. From the calling of the disciples to various teaching and preaching moments, Jesus understood true leadership is about leaving a legacy and training others to continue the work after His death. He was the ultimate leader, because before his retirement on earth, there were specific instructions for the believers. Love thy neighbor, honor thy mother and father and care for the sick are a few things he commissioned for those who would be left after his ascension into heaven. Jesus knew in order for the message to continue, equipping those who believed and followed him to be leaders would be ideal.

In the chosen passage of 1 Tim. 4: 4-16, it is evident the need for strong leadership is required so that order may be maintained in the Ephesus community. Paul writes to Timothy to give him specific instructions and encouragement on handling the people in this community. The book of 1 Timothy, along with 2 Timothy and Titus are considered the Pastoral Epistles because each claims to be written by Paul to a person he

has appointed to lead one of his churches.<sup>52</sup> The letters give advice on issues of church life, roles and responsibilities of church leaders, use of the law, and of course, the issue of false teaching. Furthermore, the letters gave advice to the appointees on how they should tend their Christian community and address these issues.

Many scholars argue the authenticity of these letters. Based on their vocabulary, which differs from Paul's earlier writings, and especially on the different historical situation they presuppose, scholars argue Paul did not write these letters. However, others disagree and credit Paul as the author of the Pastoral Epistles. There are several themes that are important throughout the book of Timothy; however, in the selected passage, the author is concerned about false teaching, the confidence of Timothy's performance and his assurance as a leader appointed by God.

Timothy was considered a son of a mixed-marriage. In antiquity, such a union was forbidden, but was common. His father's name is not mentioned; however, in 2 Tim. 1:5, his mother Eunice and her mother Lois were credited as the ones who cared for him<sup>53</sup>. Scholars believe that under the care of his mother and grandmother, his training was in Jewish culture and he spent time studying and perfecting the Holy Scriptures daily. In his development to be a leader for the Christians in Ephesus, he became one of Paul's favorite companions. Throughout the Epistles to Timothy, Paul refers to him as "son" and "my child." In antiquity, this type of reference may indicate a special bond or relationship between the two leaders.

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<sup>52</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 385.

<sup>53</sup> William Smith, F. N. Peloubet, and M. A. T. Peloubet, *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 669.

The structure of this letter is interesting. In verses one through five, the author begins the letter addressing the issues that need to be addressed. The behavior and false teaching in Ephesus is on the rise and is causing disruption between the Christian followers. In Timothy's leadership training, the author explains to him what things will occur. He begins by acknowledging that people will teach about demons, forbid marriages and refuse certain foods. The author explains the issue; however, in verse five, he assures God's promises. In the second segment of the text, the author gives Timothy action and instruction on teaching the word of faith. At the end, the author assures God's promises again. The latter portion of the text does the same thing. The author gives instruction for Timothy; in addition, Timothy's qualifications are confirmed and God's promises are assured.

To a young man reading this letter and training to be a leader, the promise of following God confirmed the following: 1) Everything God created is good, no matter what others believe or place as truth. 2) God is the Savior for all people. Meaning, if people believe in God and stand on his promises, the covering of God will be upon them. 3) Continuing in these things will save those who believe.

Why is this structure so important? As a young leader, Timothy could have considered alternative beliefs. He could have been convinced to be a part of the popular crowd. Other choices were prevalent and many others, who claimed to believe in God, were moving in a different direction and choosing other beliefs to confirm their lifestyle. However, the author reminds the young leader that regardless of what is happening around him, it is important to understand in the end God's promises are permanent. For any young person who will be in leadership, it is essential to know that temptation will

alter the perception of who they are. Sex, drugs, and violence are all prevalent in communities. The temptation of our youth is to take the lesser road. However, to train youth to be leaders means to remind them of Timothy's quest into leadership to assure them of the reward of following God and being the leader to show others are limitless.

There are several messages for a leader in the passage. The letter comes as an excellent training model for any leader especially for youth leaders. Timothy has already handled a few issues in the community. In this passage, Timothy finds himself in a very familiar predicament. As he opens the letter addressed from Paul, he reads about the matters that are dividing the Christians of Ephesus. As mentioned before, the author warns Timothy of the temptation and false teachings that are circulating. Critics relate this false teaching as a result of a group called the Gnostic Christians. The Gnostic Christians developed elaborate mythologies that graced the genealogies of divine beings all the way back to the one true God.<sup>54</sup> Most Gnostic groups wanted to escape the material world, so they chose to punish their bodies, refrain from sexual relationships and insisted on restricted diets. This is addressed in verses one through three. However, the author reminds him to avoid such teaching because everything God made was good and sanctified or appointed by God's word.

Timothy's training continues and there is more detailed instruction on how he is to put into practice what he has learned. Paul puts this youth development program in place and assures Timothy that being a good leader and instructing people on the truth, classifies him as a good servant of Christ. Youth leadership, in this case, may reflect the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 387.

notion to remind one another of what their commitment to God and to themselves is. In other words, it is about being accountable to one another.

The next aspect of Paul's Youth Leadership Training Program for Timothy lies in a simple instruction to have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales.<sup>55</sup> Maybe Paul was referring to the practices of the Gnostic Christian's false teaching or referring to other rumors and myths in reference to the Christian faith. Whatever the case, Timothy must not get his mission crossed with the false teaching of Ephesus. As a matter of fact, he must train himself both physically and spiritually. In other words, as a young man it is important to be physically trained or in the Greek what is known as *gymnasia*.<sup>56</sup> However, physical training only holds, what Paul refers to as, "some value." But the idea of godliness is in every way. It is interesting how the author uses metaphors to describe the need for good leaders. It may be Paul is advising this young man that leadership has to be holistic. The body has to be in tact, but the soul of a person, in every way must be connected to godliness.

Timothy is reminded again, that he must teach these things. His quest is to be ready to approach the theology and conflict associated with Ephesus and the Christian faith. What is interesting is the author of the letter states to Timothy to let no one despise his youth. Was there a conflict between Timothy's age and his work in the church? How does his age affect his ability to do what he was called to do?

Scholars suggest Timothy may not have been a youth; however, he was considerably younger than those who were professionals in his line of work. Many of the

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<sup>55</sup> Coogan, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 353.

<sup>56</sup> *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 84.



synagogue leaders, also known in Greek as “Archasinagous,” were aged and probably considered themselves wiser than young Timothy. If youth are going to become leaders, it is essential they not allow the past generation to hinder them from performing to their maximum potential. On the other hand, those who have been in leadership—or for the sake of comparison—adults, must see the value of youth becoming leaders. As mentioned before, Jesus’ model of leadership did not rest in his death, but He took the time to train and develop the disciples and perform miracles in the eyes of those who followed him.

This model of youth leadership becomes more detailed as Timothy is reminded of a few things he must do in order to sharpen his skills as a new leader. The author pairs two practical concepts with three virtue concepts. First, Timothy must be an example in speech and conduct. Timothy is responsible for assuring that what he said and what he did matched up. It may mean Timothy has to assure that at all times his character aligns with what the Christian Faith promotes. Which ties to the three virtues mentioned, love, faith and purity.

Love is the act of showing compassion for something or someone. Faith means to believe in something or in this case God. Purity is the observance of or being of moral conduct. These are essential tools for leadership. Timothy must be an example to believers in all of these things. Believers in this passage may be those who conduct themselves by the Christian faith. Timothy’s target is to show acts of love, faith and godliness for those who are watching him and give to those who trust his lifestyle as an example of what Christ has commissioned.

The last portion of this youth leadership training comes in the form of a reminder. This young man’s ability does not rest in what he assumes he can do. But rather it is

authentic because the council of elders gave it through prophecy with the laying on of hands. The concept of laying of the hands roots back in the ancient conviction that the human hand could transmit blessings in the Jewish culture. This meant the teacher would pass on his authority to the student by laying hands on their heads.<sup>57</sup> In this passage, Timothy has been presented by the elders, the gift to lead the people. As this young leader begins his journey, Paul reminds him of the gift he has already obtained. His job is to operate in the authority that has been confirmed for him.

The ending of this model for youth training is interesting. The author tells Timothy to put into practice and devote himself to the things suggested. There is urgency for Timothy to understand he will not always hit the target, but by practice or being repetitive in action in order to improve results is essential to his growth. The ideal leader understands that in any aspect of development, practicing and devoting time to the gift you have will result in progress. Paul reminds this young leader this and assures him such action will not only benefit him, but will also benefit those who believe in his leadership.

Considering Jeremiah and Timothy's call into leadership, scriptures gives interpretation on what is a good leadership model. There is undoubtedly a need to develop youth to be leaders. What can be learned from these two choice passages of scripture? First, as both Jeremiah and Timothy exhibit the call by God for youth to be leaders—age has nothing to do with purpose.

In this case, both Jeremiah and Timothy were young, called and gifted to do the work. Second, each passage exhibits a model or training with key points to being an effective leader. The first is the need to have a self-check. The opening of Jeremiah

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 87.

acknowledges that self-identify is important. The language of predestination and understanding genetic and spiritual makeup is critical as a leader. Timothy is also reminded he has a gift, and not to forget his gift has been confirmed by the elders. If youth are going to be effective leaders, understanding themselves and their gifts will be a key component for leadership training. Once students understand these values, the possibility of further growth will be endless.

Next, communication is another key component for youth in leadership. For Jeremiah and Timothy, speech was critical for leadership. Even though Jeremiah was hesitant about his speech and Timothy had to be reminded that good speech and conduct was necessary, the concept of speaking was critical for a leader. If training youth to be leaders is going to have any effectiveness, youth must conquer the concept of good speech and communication. Leaders must be in a place to speak truth to people and having good communication skills is key.

Next, both passages show a need for leaders to be connected with the community they are involved with. Jeremiah will have to speak to several communities in order to speak prophecy for the people to turn back to God. It is the same case with Timothy—Paul reminds him to be an example in love, faith and purity. Giving himself to those who are watching him will not only be what God desires, but it may be the component that saves the hearers. If youth are to be effective leaders, there must be urgency for giving back to the community in which time was invested in them.

In this New Testament passage, Timothy is reminded that adequate study is essential. It is almost as if Paul reminds him that he has to be perpetual about learning. In verse thirteen, he tells him to give attention to public readings of scriptures, exhorting and

to teaching. If youth are going to be effective leaders, adequate study is necessary. In leadership development, there is a need to express the importance of staying in school and to know that learning never stops.

Lastly, the most important key to an effective youth leadership program is the acknowledgement of God in the process. Students must understand God has ordained them and has laid hands on them to do the work. Both Jeremiah and Timothy have assignments not created by them, but ordained by God. If their mission and assignments are to be successful, they must have God present for both council and protection.

In conclusion, training youth to be leaders is important. The selected text gives way to two samples of young people being trained to be leaders. Many members of communities feel as though violence, drugs, teen pregnancies and dropping out of school are destroying the youth. That may be true, but what is the response from the community? What preventive measures are in place to give students an alternative to those lifestyles? Scriptures have shown that youth have the ability to lead a country back to God and to keep order in chaotic cities. It is not that students cannot lead, but have they been presented the opportunity to use their talents and skills to better themselves and the community? By developing youth to be leaders, the goal is to transform lives, alter negative choices, and promote healthy lifestyles. Youth are important, and there should more programs that provide relevant approaches to teaching, training and mentoring youth.

### **Historical Foundations**

The idea of training youth to be leaders is not a foreign concept. There have been many organizations that recognized the value of youth being leaders and invested time,

resources, and strategic planning in order to preserve and strengthen youth.

Organizations such as the Boys and Girls Scouts of America and the YMCA are a few committed programs that have been forerunners in developing youth. Their methods have been world changing because of the initiative to devote the tools in order to rescue youth and preserve their chance to become productive citizens in society.

There have been other programs that have been essential to youth leadership development. Robert Raikes and the development of Sunday School, the Young Men Christians Association (YMCA), the Girls and Boys Scouts of America, and Young Life Youth Program are a few examples of models of youth leadership programs. Through these programs, there is a historical connection of youth leadership and the need for a post-modern approach to youth leadership training. Historically, these programs have been pillars in society and have been indispensable to creating the framework to developing youth.

Robert Raikes has a model of youth development that churches across America use on a weekly basis. Raikes was considered the founder of Sunday School. His story begins in the early eighteenth century where his family was noted in the community of Gloucester, England because of their publishing company. The Raikes' family was known for being energetic, independent in race, cautious and thrifty. During the time of the Raikes family development, the community was full of poverty, depression and poor development. There was often plight between the common and the poor. The line of distinction was clear and there was a clear separation between socio-economic classes. The Raikes were a family who were fortunate enough to be considered "common." In

other words, they owned land, ships and was apart of multiple affairs within England. They were in political affairs, a part of the clergy, farmers, and merchants.

After a failed partnership, Robert Raikes Sr. remained the owner of *Gloucester Journal Newspaper*. However, the printing company was not popular because it frequently published rebuttals against the treatment of the poor, inhumane gestures of cock fighting and other controversial issues throughout Gloucester. To those who were considered dignitaries, the idea of questioning their way of life was not popular and the Raikes often received criticism and threats because of their published work. Even after the death of Robert Raikes Sr., the newspaper company continued its tradition through the framework of Robert Raikes Jr. Furthermore, Raikes Sr., not only left the family with the newspaper, he also left them with land, a home and the task of taking care of their mother until her death. Robert Raikes was only twenty-one years old when his father died, however, this would be the beginning for the Raikes family in their journey to transform and reshape the world.

Robert Raikes Jr. was an ambitious man with goals, wit and class. Educated at Cathedral College, he was conservative, well rounded and extremely educated. Harris described him as a, “Great scholar, he was simply a well educated man, very superior to ordinary citizens, engaged in trade and able to hold his own when in the company of “men of letters and “men of the word.” In 1937, Robert Rakes Jr. married Ann Trigee and their marriage produced nine children. After a year of owning the printing company, he relocated and separated his shop from his personal life. While he was in his new location, he would open his window of his “den” and hear the neglected children of the city

playing and using foul language. Little did he realize, this would soon lead him to be the forerunner in transforming youth to be leaders and productive citizens in society.

Raikes impeccable leadership and devotion to the people, goes beyond his printing company. His life was always on the side of the weak and marginalized people. He would spend time caring for those who were incarcerated, and taught them about God's word through evangelism and his printed newsletter. As previously mentioned, his paper consisted of information that would bring attention to the need of bettering the condition of the common people and training them to be productive citizens in society. His goals were simple: to elevate people and to repress those who directly or indirectly degraded them. Therefore, in his commitment to reaching those goals, Raikes was known for supporting and mentoring those who were in prison.

In an article he published, he discussed the importance of acknowledging and providing training and compassion for those who were incarcerated. This commitment was consistent because Raikes was known for providing employment opportunities for prisoners once they were released. Much to his dismay, the prisoners would often return back to a life of theft and unorganized living, resulting in readmission to jail. For over thirty years, Robert worked hard with the prisoners and was unsuccessful in his task of ministering to and rehabilitating prisoners.

The failure of his prison ministry was the stepping-stone to a program that would change the face of ministry across America. Raikes' idea of transforming a community of poor, uneducated people began with training the adults, however those in prisons and on the streets did not grasp the concept of a reformed society. Raikes believed vice is preventable, so instead of trying to transform the adults, he converted his efforts to

transforming children. In 1780, Raikes went on a three-year quest, to transform the children of his community. Based on the condition of the youth, this task would essentially be difficult. Most of these children were socially disbanded from society, uncombed, unwashed, ragged and disgusting in appearance and language. They were often considered a waste because of their disconnect from what is considered normalcy.

In Ann Boylan's book on Sunday Schools, she has this to say about the youth of this time: "Most of the children were perceived as a social problem because they were under the control of no visible authority, no parent, no master and they violated accepted standards of public behavior." For the community, it was accepted to leave the poor as poor and to keep suppression as reality.

However, Raikes knew this was not only a disgrace, but it was opposite of God's vision for people. So he hired a teacher to teach these poor labeled children educational concepts, social etiquette, bible teaching, and other life concepts. For three years, this program ran successfully without any public notice.

What Raikes and others involved discovered was these disenfranchised youth in the community needed an environment with structure. For most of them, the parents had no value for education, social etiquette, God, or the spiritual development of their child.

Second, the children needed to be seen as an assets and not a liability. In other words, as the community saw them as misfits, there was valuable leadership potential in every student that needed to be released by proper teaching and not allow their social economic status to hinder them from becoming successful citizens in society. If society was going to continue, there must be a sense of urgency for all youth.



Lastly, each child needed a constant reminder their future is brighter and they can contribute to the nurturing of their community.

For three years, this program continued secretly. People in the community were astonished these once poor, dirty-mouthed, fighting youth could sit in church, converse with others, and be enmeshed in society. What was once noted as the “Rugged School” because of the population it served is now noted as Sunday School. Raikes used contemporized analogies to teach youth about leadership, the Bible, God, and tools to help them succeed in life. Raikes had a natural attraction for youth and understood in order to transform the community that “vice is preventable” and it began with youth.

Of course there was opposition and disregards to Raikes efforts. Many upper classman thought that such effort was beneath them and such investment was not necessary, however Raikes saw more than just a babysitting service, he saw the future of the community and was committed to bettering the community.

In 1844, another youth program developed to give young people an opportunity to develop, grow and to become leaders in society. It started with a man by the name of Sir George Williams of Somerset, England who had a vision to improve the spirituality of young men in his work environment. Williams was a draper or cloth maker in London and joined the city with 150,000 other young men. The city was full of opportunities to excel both economically and socially. With a city full of diverse thoughts, morals and values, the ability to live a Christian life that would align with biblical principals became very difficult for George Williams. He was very committed to daily Bible devotions and was very loyal to abiding by the Word of God. Williams struggle led him to pray for a partner who would agree with him in devotion. Less than a month after realizing he

needed help, J. Christopher Smith became his roommate and the two of them devoted time to biblical study. The two of them decided it was not only beneficial for them to have this structural teaching, but also for others who struggled with commitment due to the vast temptation of London. Together they developed a Bible study and a “literary society for mutual improvement.” Their concept was simple, ban together to make each other socially and spiritually accountable. Use small group settings to help build the moral character and leadership in young men.

In 1864, Williams and ten other men became intentional about their effort to build others and formed what is known today as the Young Men’s Christian Association or the YMCA. Williams overall objective was to provide “improvement of the spiritual condition of the young men engaged in houses of business, by the formation of Bible classes, family and social prayer meetings, mutual improvement societies, or any other spiritual agency.”

Their commitment became world known and before long, they had become a noted organization across London. The YMCA began its expansion and developed a committee consisting of a President, Vice president, Secretary, Treasure and a committee. By developing this infrastructure, the organization was prepared to create their constitution so their program could reach beyond London, and it did.

By 1885, many European prayer groups had adopted the name YMCA and the idea of providing young men with biblical studies and leadership training had spread across the world, forming what is now known as the World Alliance of YMCA’s. This consists of countries such as Switzerland, France, Germany, South Africa and India. Years later, there was a Boston sea captain and missionary by the name of Thomas

Valentine Sullivan who had the same worries about young men and youth in the United States. Impressed and connected with the overall theme and philosophy of the YMCA, he was inspired to lead the first United States YMCA, in Boston on December 29, 1851.

The expansion became a world phenomenon and all over the world YMCA's were developed. It became a place for more than just young men, but it became diverse in its organization and accepted women to join their efforts in improving lives after World War II. The YMCA philosophy evolved and soon provided an even more detailed approach to improving the lives of young people. With over 150 years of success, there are many other programs that would not have been made possible without the YMCA. Some of those programs include: The Boys Scouts of America, The Negro National Baseball League, Toastmasters, and Father's Day all got their start at YMCA's.

The philosophy was simple for the YMCA, which is to put Christian principals into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Their overall goals are to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Through the development of sports, activities, and leadership programs, the YMCA shifts its effort from a Bible study to a more complex model that will meet the needs of the people. The organization's commitment to evolve with the needs of the community is one of the key components of how it has sustained for over 150 years. Its founding principal of developing youth is perpetual in its current programs. Even though the YMCA athletic venues provide leadership development through sports, they have initiated strong programs designed to directly teach youth about leadership.

One of the programs they have instituted is the Black Achievers program.

According to the YMCA of America, the Black Achievers program is defined as “an academic achievement and career development initiative for middle school and high school youth and teens. The high school program is referred to as the Black Achievers Program and the middle school program is referred to as Youth Achievers, although both are operated under the umbrella of the Black Achievers Program.”<sup>58</sup>

This program provides growth and development to youth of color. Their focus is to provide awareness on an academic, social, and economic level. By exposing youth to a variety of opportunities, their goal is simple, to build youth to be leaders and to encourage them to maximize potential.

The program has seven goals that help shape the outcome for all participants: Raise academic standards for youth of color, assist youth of color in gaining acceptance to institutions of higher learning, expose youth of color to diverse career options, provide minority adult role models to inspire youth of color to set and achieve personal and professional goals, help youth of color develop a positive sense of self, build character and develop positive assets in youth of color, and create channels for continuing community involvement by business and industry.

The program was founded in 1967. Quentin Mease developed the program under the original name of Youth Black Achievers of Houston. With over 200 active programs, the program continues to grow in both urban and suburban communities.

The YMCA continues to focus on youth leadership and development through one of its major initiatives, the Youth in Government Leadership Program. The program is

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<sup>58</sup> The YMCA National Black Achievers Program, <http://www.fvymca.org> (accessed, October 1, 2012).

designed to give youth an opportunity to voice their opinions, views and address issues involving state and local legislative decisions. Designed for High School students, Youth in Government introduces students to the world of politics and governmental affairs. Students are trained to understand the logic of law making and how these laws can make or break a community.

Clement “Pete” Duran established the Youth and Government Program in 1936 in New York. As of 2010, the program operates in thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia, serving nearly 60,000 high school students around the country. The motto of the program is “Democracy must be learned by each generation.” The YMCA provides other youth programs such as their Global Youth Empowerment Initiative. This effort focuses on moving the mission of the YMCA in a direction that spreads beyond the United States. This program invites youth to dialogue and train to be global leaders. Countries such as Africa, Asia, Canada, Latin America, the Middle East and the Caribbean Islands are among those who train their youth in global leadership. With this belief, the preservation of quality leaders will result in a more diverse and cohesive society.

Between the YMCA and Robert Raikes, the effort of Jim Rayburn and the Young Life Movement is considered one of the most noted youth leadership programs. Born in 1909 in Newton, Kansas, Jim Rayburn grew up in a very conservative Christian home. He was the son of a Presbyterian evangelist that practiced a strict routine of Sunday school meetings, church camps, Bible study and other church related events. On Sundays there was no playing or conversation that did not relate to God. If Jim or his four brothers went against this rule, they were punished in order to appease an angry God.

Jim had a very adventurous side of him. He enjoyed sports, outdoors, baseball, and reaching out to those who did not know Jesus Christ. He often wondered why the two could not go together. Little did he realize this sudden request would be the beginning of his ministry.

Contrary to his upbringing, Jim married an un-churched girl by the name of Maxine Stanley. He did not tell his parents, until after his final semester in school. Because of their traditional values, they insisted they have a proper wedding. Soon after his official marriage ceremony, Jim's ministry journey began as he accepted a position in ministry in New Mexico in a Presbyterian church. The ministry was stagnant in tradition and Jim understood in order to move the ministry in a different direction, the ineffective ways of their past must be challenged with new innovative ways to reach people. Jim believed, "If you want anybody to show up, don't have it on Sunday and don't call it a school." Because of this, his quest of ministry was to reach those outside of churches.

Because of his delivery method, children were mostly attracted to him. This led him to go to local schools and street corners to connect with youth. His goal was to reach those who did not traditionally attend church. His interest in ministry increased and he was led to attend seminary at Dallas Theological Seminary. Two years into seminary, he organized meetings in Gainesville, Texas with local youth. With such a powerful delivery and different approach to youth development, Rayburn began to see his ministry grow from eleven students to over 170 during the spring of its existence. The organization had adopted the name Miracle Book Club, but in the fall of 1941, the name changed to what is known now as Young Life.

Young Life success is centered on their approach of being post-modern in their methods of reaching youth. In its early development, meeting at local schools and youth hangouts was ideal. However, Jim Rayburn wanted to expand its effort and include a camp for both Christian and non-Christian youth. This camp would be a place where the gospel would be entertaining and not a bore. Jim was known for saying, “It’s a sin to bore a kid with the gospel message.” He believed learning about God and training youth to be strong leaders in ministry should be vibrant and not dreadful. This philosophy meant making the gospel relational and not regretful. Because of this, Jim believed the program must expand. Many of his board members did not agree with this approach, but Jim was persistent with his vision. In 1946, the camp opened and was successful. It was so successful he expanded and created three additional sites in five years.

The program was experiencing an all-time high and was noted throughout the world because of its effort to develop youth into becoming strong Christians and leaders. In a different light, Jim Rayburn’s health and momentum declined due to his addiction to painkillers and his conflict with organized church. The organization thought it would benefit the survival of the program for Jim to resign and allow the board to continue the ministry. That was in 1964; in 1970, Jim Rayburn, founder of Young Life died.

Jim was most noted as one of the pioneers of youth ministry. He had a unique viewpoint of developing youth to become more than just church members. His view was to train youth to love Christ and to lead others to do the same. This meant reaching those who did not know church culture. He was most known for his method to reach and train students. He believed the following principals:

- a) Go where the kids congregate b) accept them the way they are c) learn how to walk in wisdom to those outside of the faith, d) see the dignity of each person e)

find a neutral setting for meeting with students f) create a climate that is informal g) speak naturally in terms of familiar to the vocabulary of kids, h) communicate your certainties rather than flaunt your doubts, i) consider it a sin to bore kids with the gospel, j) build on their instinct of adventure and k) capitalize on the elements of good humor and music to establish and openness to the gospel.<sup>59</sup>

Youth ministry has revolutionized through the course of history. Considering historical youth leadership movements such as The YMCA, Robert Raikes' Sunday School movement, and the formation of Young Life, the urgency to train and develop youth to be leaders, have made a mark in how youth ministry and youth leadership can change the direction and lifestyle of those who take advantage of it. Considering the efforts of these movements, many churches and communities have embraced the structure and success of some of the organizations mentioned. The YMCA, Sunday school and Young Life created a platform for young people to embrace their call into leadership. The idea to focus on strengths and capacities in which youth can grow and develop is essential for any program to succeed. In the development and purpose of the YMCA, Young Life and Sunday school, they all took advantage of reaching beyond normalcy to create a place where youth may flourish. Not only that, but the above programs presented a plan that did not only secure their present reality, but their efforts have been exceptional in the longevity of youth today.

Training youth to be leaders has to be an effort that is intentional. The strategy must consist of providing a non-traditional approach to reaching church and un-churched youth. In other words, programs must be effective. The issue is many programs are surfaced-based with no transformative methods. However, the above programs have

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<sup>59</sup> Ann M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of An American Institution*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 6.



presented techniques that were post-modern for their time.

For example, Robert Raikes took underprivileged youth and imparted in them cultural and educational values to help them exceed beyond their impoverished circumstances. In many cases, Raikes was criticized for providing an avenue for youth who were socially marginalized. However, Raikes vision was beyond the circumference of the England town. He knew what it would take in order to train youth to be leaders and productive citizens of society. That was the common theme of the above visionaries; do things differently to get different results. In their time, they were all creating methods that were unusual and different. However, because of their bold approach to go against the norm, society in a whole has benefited. Youth across the world can participate in transformative programs that develop them as people and leaders.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This project involved a group of participants, from the context of Union Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, who participated in classes focused on various components of leadership, while using media technology as a tool to raise awareness about various components of leadership for youth. The activities were orchestrated to raise awareness and to introduce youth to leadership styles and practices.

Each activity was designed to empower the participant to consider leadership tools that would increase their knowledge base about leadership and to apply their knowledge base in various aspects, especially in school, home and in the community. The desired outcome was for youth to raise their awareness about leadership and to consider their current leadership abilities. After completion of the program, students will develop a plan of action on how to engage in leadership opportunities rather it be roles in their school, ministry, and/or at home.

### **Hypothesis**

If youth participate in a media technology driven leadership empowerment program, perception of their abilities and role as a leader will increase. Through this leadership program, students will successfully bridge their perception about their role in the community, home and ministry as leaders and learners. Showing an increase in the

knowledge base about their leadership ability will improve their perception and encourage participants to apply what they have learned by participating in ministry programs, school programs, and other community associated programs.

### Research Methods Used To Test It

Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The main goal of this case study qualitative strategy, as defined by Creswell, is to identify the background knowledge of adults who have not engaged in the usage of technology.<sup>1</sup> The recommended research method is a qualitative measuring approach that consists of using a focus group of students, ages fourteen through seventeen. The main goal of the case study is to allow the qualitative approach to identify the cause and effect of the program design. Developing a plan of action that teaches basic leadership skills while using media technology, will invoke discussion and awareness of how they can become leaders and develop leadership skills. In addition, participants will be empowered to become leaders and consider their position and role as a leader in their faith settings, schools, and the community.

The proposed goal of the qualitative research approach in this project is to offer a perspective of life-skills lessons in reference to being leaders and learners while connecting biblical references and using media technology.

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<sup>1</sup> Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009),

It is the intended goal of a this qualitative research to offer a perspective of life skills lessons and provide reports that reflect the ability to document the resulting phenomenon. The collected data, which included: surveys, participant interviews, parent interviews, independent and dependent practice, audio-visual materials, blog responses and group discussions were analyzed. A journal was kept for documentation during each session with the participants.

There will be an initial paper pre-assessment to see how the participants were able to identify and classify the prevailing problems and ask some background questions, so the writer would know how to facilitate and organize the focus groups. Throughout the sessions, informal and formative assessments were utilized to see the change in the data. At the end of the sessions, there was a post-assessment given to measure the outcomes.

### **Project Title**

The title of this project is *A Biblical Model for Raising Awareness for Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners for Leadership in the Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology*. This title was chosen because the basis of the research design is to raise awareness about leadership while using media technology as a tool to teach leadership skills. To accomplish this person-centered approach, this project was designed to raise awareness of various leadership components.

This project involved a small group of participants, from the context of Union Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This group will be introduced to various leadership components, hands-on activity, reflection activities, and other group activities. The actions were orchestrated to help raise awareness about leadership and to

aid youth to consider their current leadership roles and abilities. Each activity designed encouraged and heightened student's awareness about their leadership abilities and introduced participants to other aspects of leadership. The desired outcome was for youth to raise their awareness about leadership and to consider their current leadership abilities.

After completion of the program, students will develop a plan of action of how to engage in leadership opportunities and roles in their school, ministry and/or at home.

### Research Design

The recommended research design will be a qualitative measuring approach that consists of using a focus group of twenty-three participants from Union Baptist Church in Winston, Salem, NC. Participants were between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. The main goal of the case study was to allow the qualitative approach to identify the cause and effect of the program design. To accomplish this goal, a plan of action will be developed that teaches basic leadership skills while using media technology. This will invoke discussion and awareness of how they can become leaders and develop leadership skills. In addition, participants will be empowered to become leaders and consider their position and role as a leader in their faith settings, schools, and the community.

The proposed goal of the qualitative research approach in this project is to offer a perspective of leadership qualities lessons in reference to being leaders and learners while connecting biblical references and media technology. In order to accomplish this, the triangulation used included (1) Pre-test and Post-test, (2) Student Questionnaire, (3) Parent Interviews (3).

Research participant's blogged their responses after each session to reflect what they gained in knowledge about leadership during the study. The blog responses will also be used and coded throughout the research to determine if student's knowledge base was increased.

### **Instrumentation**

The project will include a pre-assessment (appendix B), post-assessment (appendix B), parent evaluation (appendix C) and participant interviews (appendix G). The assessment will include questions in reference to biblical understanding of leadership, how they view themselves as leaders, and their role in leadership as youth. The post-test will consist of the same questions. The parent evaluation will reflect responses, or noted changes in the participant after completing the program. The desired outcome is the participant's awareness and perception of themselves, as peer-leaders/learners will increase.

There will be documentation and journaling during each session by the researcher. The documentation will consists of reflections and modifications that need to occur in order to improve the overall function of the project. This is important for the project outcome because it reflects adjustments, concerns and project improvements throughout the duration of the study.

The following tools will be used to help evaluate and conduct the study: collected data which include surveys, independent and dependent practice, audio-visual materials, blog reflections and group discussions.

## **Project Design and Measurement**

This project's aim is to empower and raise awareness for peer-leaders and peer-learners about leadership while using media technology as a tool. This model will aid students identifying their ability to be leaders and discover ways in which they can use their gifts, talents, and abilities in their communities, school, home and especially in ministry or church. The use of technology as a tool serves as an instrument that is relevant to the population in this study.

The module will consist of youth between the ages of thirteen and seventeen from Union Baptist Church. Participants participated in a seven-week program will meet once a week, examining leadership skills and viewing it through the lens of the participant. The qualitative research strategies used will consist of the following: Pre-assessment, Post-assessment, Participant interviews and Parent-interviews. This strategy's goal was to engage youth to consider themselves as leaders and agents of change, resulting in positive outcomes and personal development.

### **Research Method**

The recommended research method will be a qualitative measuring approach that consists of using a focus group of students, ages fourteen through seventeen. The main goal of the case study will be to allow the qualitative approach to identify the cause and effect of the program design. Developing a plan of action that teaches basic leadership skills while using media technology, invoked discussion and awareness of how they can become and develop leadership skills. In addition, participants will be empowered to

become leaders and consider their position and role as a leader in their faith settings, schools, and the community.

The proposed goal of the qualitative research approach in this project is to offer a perspective of being leaders and learners while connecting biblical references and media technology.

To accomplish this task an educational and learning environment is to manufacture the allowed participants to learn about leadership and increase their knowledge base about leadership.

The group was comprised of twenty-six participants between ages thirteen and seventeen. The researcher will analyze the collected data, which includes: questionnaire pre-test, post-test, interviews, and parent interviews. In order to analyze data the questionnaire will be summarized based on individual responses. The pre and post-test goal will reflect a possible increase in the knowledge base as it pertains to leadership after completion of the program. By analyzing the pre and post-interviews, their knowledge base about leadership will be analyzed, while identifying changes in responses as it pertains to their knowledge about leadership. The parent interviews will occur at the conclusion of the project. The purpose of the parent involvement is to examine if parents have noticed increase in their child's knowledge base about leadership. This result will be determined by parent's observation of the program.

Orientation will be the first session, which will include the participants, and their parents or guardian. The orientation will last for one hour explaining the expectations and goals of the project, expectations from parents, overall outcome of the project, and the



future of the project. The post-assessments will be completed at the end of the project. The orientation was held on December 16, 2014.

There were a total of forty-two participants who signed up for the project. There were thirty students who attended the orientation. A total of twenty-seven participants completed the program. At the end of the eight-week course the researcher presented each participant with a certificate of completion.

### **Group Sessions**

The group met on Sunday afternoons at Union Baptist Church in Winston, Salem, North Carolina. The sessions began promptly at 2:00 P.M. and concluded at 4:00 P.M. The sessions began with scripture, prayer, a daily overview and lunch. The project's foundational scripture was used as the guide for our weekly devotion. The scriptures were expounded upon to remind students about their leadership ability while connecting the biblical reference to the project.

Week One started with student orientation and participant expectations for the program. Students were assigned research numbers and were asked to remember their number throughout the duration of the project. The numbers were used to identify them throughout the leadership program. Orientation explained the purpose, roles, expectations, and the end goal. Students completed a tutorial of the blog site that was created for this project. They then created blog accounts to use for the project. The participants discussed their understanding of leadership and were asked to demonstrate and present their concepts to the entire group. All the events were orchestrated to build confidence of all participants, to introduce everyone to the group and to engage students

about leadership. The participant's responses created a foundation of where the next session should start.

Week Two started by reviewing blog responses and discussing the importance of gifts, skills, and talents. The session was titled: *It's In Me: Discovering and Exploring My Gifts*. Participants will view the film *X: Men*. The fundamental purpose of this film will help gauge conversation and raise awareness as it pertains to understating their gift and recognizing the gifts in others. Students completed a spiritual gift assessment. The purpose of the spiritual gift assessment was to aid participants to consider other aspects of their gifts. While many consider, sports, singing and other concepts as a gift, the spiritual gift assessments purpose is to create another perspective for participants. After students reviewed the film, they were challenged to answer assigned question and to post them on the blog and be prepared to discuss them in our next session. The questions for participants include: What examples of leadership did you notice in the film? Identify at least five gifts in the film and compare these gifts with people in your community or ministry. What gifts did you notice are closely related to your gifts? What can we learn about gifts and leadership from the movie *X-Men*?

Week Three students continued the conversation about *X-Men* and Spiritual Gifts. Students continued to discuss the questions assigned from week two, while discussing the biblical components of gifts and leadership. Students were introduced to new and various concepts of leadership. There were group discussion, games, and other components that were essential to the overall learning process for week three.

Week Four participants completed leadership lessons from YouTube entitled, *YouTube Talk*. This also included group discussion on leadership, job/scholarship

interviews, work ethics, business dinner meetings, and dressing for success. Students engaged in various hands-on and practical experiences as it pertained to being better leaders in the area of self-appearance, setting goals, and reaching those goals.

Week Five participants closed out week four's discussion and began the new topic of education and leadership. Students were given a set of questions to keep in mind while watching the movie *The Great Debaters*. The fundamental purpose of this film is to enmesh education, leadership, and youth involvement. Students used a series of questions, were encouraged to ask their own questions and to think critically as it pertains to youth leadership, education, and how the Bible connects all of these components.

Week Six participants closed out Week Five discussions on the film, *The Great Debaters*. Week Six's discussion featured the importance of leadership and social media. Participants participated in entire group discussion, selected team discussion, YouTube clip discussions, and a PowerPoint presentation of how leadership and appropriate social media are critical to the overall development of student leadership.

Week Seven participants engaged in a Skype presentation. The presentation was lead by Dustin Pickett. Dustin Pickett led students to consider the importance of youth in leadership in the following areas: School, Education, Social Media, Ministry/Church and in the community. This session was conducted for one-and-a-half hours. The presentation was conducted along with the researcher.

Week Eight participants received their completion certificates during a completion ceremony that was conducted at Union Baptist Church with the students. The ceremony consists of students discussing what they learned and giving their testimony of the program. Each student received a certificate of completion.

### *Weekly Reflection Reports*

Context associates were present to observe the sessions and provide feedback. Their observations were descriptive and not analytical or evaluative. The feedback and was read and used as a data collection tool. There was a briefing after the session with the context associates and volunteers in order to improve the program and assure effectiveness throughout.

### *Journaling*

A journal of the students' reactions was kept during the session. She also kept a journal of each session and anything that was vital to the research.

### *Context Associates and Professional Associates*

During the process contact was made with the context associates to receive verbal feedback as they observed the group sessions and for overall development of the research. The professional associates were contacted to receive their input as new challenges occurred in the project design.

### *Project Management*

This research project was conducted and aimed at raising awareness for youth about leadership, in hopes they would consider being leaders or improving their current leadership skills and qualities. To complete this project, the researcher had the primary responsibility of implementing, planning, and gathering data. Throughout the process the

researcher received feedback and suggestions from pre-selected context and professional associates.

The context associates consisted of a group of four people, chosen by the researcher, who were involved in youth ministry or worked with students. Selection was based on their knowledge base and the willingness to see change and an increase in the effectiveness of youth leadership in our community. Each contextual associate was valuable in bringing his/her professional experience of making a difference within the context. The context associates provided a level of expertise that helped guide the formation of the research design and project. Weekly consulting was important and provided depth to the outcome and development of the research project.

Another important resource for this project was a group of professional associates. This group consists of persons who work outside of the context and have the role of providing information and advice. The professional associates aided by providing feedback on research design, advising on theological framework, assisting the researcher in engaging historical, practical, and biblical concepts as it pertains to leadership and youth. Each professional associate provided a level of expertise that helped guide and shape the overall development of this project.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

The focus group for *Raising Awareness for Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology* began on Sunday, December 16, 2013 with an interest meeting and orientation. The first class session began on Sunday February 16th, 2014 and ended on April 6, 2014. During the eight-week sessions there were twenty-seven participants between the ages of fourteen and seventeen years old who committed themselves to attending every Sunday until all sessions were completed. Two of the initial three participants had to withdraw from the program due to schedule conflict with school and work. They expressed interest in the continuation of the project.

The sessions continued with twenty-six committed participants with three having to miss a few sessions due to work, but overall, everyone else attended all sessions.

### **Collection of Data**

#### **Leadership Sessions**

Session One was the general group introduction session. Students were assigned research numbers and group rules were applied. Students were introduced to the general rules of the sessions. The first rule was students must participate in the program. Second, students must respect others. Third, students must respect the facilitator at all times.

Recommended by context associates, the rules were necessary for students of this age group.

Students participated in a group rule development. This activity allowed participants to develop their own rules for the session. As part of the leadership awareness for the project, this activity allowed students to engage in decision-making and it forced students to work together as a team. It also created community, allowing students to become acquainted with one another. Many students were familiar with each other, however there were many students that were unfamiliar with others in the group.

Students were introduced to various definitions of leadership. With the use of a PowerPoint presentation, participants discussed *Ten Commitments to Leadership*. This information was presented in a group discussion form. Students were separated into groups and challenged to discuss the leadership themes for this project.

The ten leadership themes included: Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate, and improve, experiment, take risks, and learn from the accompanying mistakes. Envision an uplifting and ennobling future. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes and dreams. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trusts. Strengthen people by giving power away, providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and offering visible support. Set the example by behaving in ways that are consistent with shared values. Achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment. Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project. Celebrate team accomplishments regularly.

These values were contributed from James Kouze's and Barry Posner's book, *the Leadership Challenge*. After students had a chance to discuss the themes, they had to present the themes to the entire group. Many students were comfortable with presenting while others expressed great anxiety and nervousness while presenting. As students began to present, they were critiqued on their presentation based on the following: confidence, voice projection, clarity of presentation and overall knowledge. Each student was publically addressed in front of the entire team. They were corrected, asked to project with their voices and their presentation was critiqued. Student's reactions were fearful. This approach served multiple purposes for leadership awareness.

First, it focused on teamwork, which is one of the attributes the group defined as leadership. Participants had to work as a group to develop their rules and agreed to abide by them throughout the duration of the project. Participants also had to learn to work in a group as they discussed how they were going to present their leadership commitment assignments. The overall purpose of this session was to raise awareness of leadership through the lens of teamwork, how to effectively present to a group, as well as to discuss how this group was going to define leadership. Students expressed excitement to learn about how they can be better leaders. There were some students that were more reserved, however, they participated and showed some interest in learning about leadership.

Lastly, participants were introduced to the blog site and were given instructions on how to respond by blog. Participants were giving a tutorial of the blog. With the assistance of the context associates and volunteers, students were able to set-up their accounts in order to blog after each session.



Session Two was entitled: *It's In Me: Discovering My Gifts*. The focus of this session was to introduce youth to understanding their spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities. Students started the afternoon with sign-in and group prayer. Participants later discussed what they learned from the previous session. From the first session to the second session, there was still anxiety from many students about the level of expectancy for the program. However, there were some who displayed knowledge gained from the last session. Many of the participants were able to repeat and define the principles from the previous session. Therefore, it is recorded that there was a level of growth already. Students expressed how they were able to use the principles throughout the week at school, home and on their jobs.

Students began to watch the movie, *X-Men*. They were challenged to consider the following questions as they viewed selections of the film. The questions included: List the gifts that you noticed throughout the film. What gifts would you consider to be good? What gifts would you notice as evil/bad? What happened at the end of the movie with everyone's gifts? What gift most closely compared to their gift?

Participants reviewed the film. All appeared very intrigued by the film and they were consistent with recording their responses to the questions.

Students participated in a brief dialogue at the "halfway" mark of the film. They begin to discuss the answers they were challenged to find throughout the film. Many expressed how they view the gifts and what they noticed throughout the film. They recorded the following observations about gifts and talents that were displayed in the film: kinesthetic, the ability to move in rapid motion, the ability to have high tone voices, the ability to change the weather, the ability to change appearance, the ability to run at a

fast past, the ability to create fire and ice, the ability to heal, and the ability to have super human strength.

Participants were very inquisitive about the gifts and this was a pathway that led us into our group discussion. At the end of the film, students were asked to respond to the questions on the blog and to blog what they gained from the session. Students expressed they felt compelled to consider what their gifts were and to consider how they can use their gifts to become better leaders at school, at home, and in the community. Students were also reminded to blog and express their experiences.

Session Three began with prayer and lunch. As part of leadership development, students were assigned various responsibilities to help engage them in leadership awareness. These responsibilities included setting up for lunch, providing nametags, managing sign-in, and assisting with various administrative duties for each session.

The group came together and we discussed last session's movie review. Many students expressed how they thought it was very interesting how movies and leadership can connect. Thus, making it easier to relate to their own personal views and perception of what leadership means to them. We discussed the concept of leadership as it pertains to the film and used the PowerPoint Presentations and handouts. The discussion introduced participants and bridged the concept of gifts, ability, and skills to leadership. The overall purpose of this session was to ignite and raise awareness of how leadership, skills and gifts are important. Participants began to contemporize the concept of gifts as it related to the film and engaged in dialogue on how leadership in today's society use their gifts for evil. Various names and positions were mentioned in politics, in our local communities, and even in the family structure.

Participants reconsidered how they can use their gifts for good and build the community, church, and their schools. The worksheet (Appendix E) and PowerPoints were added to expound on understanding spiritual gifts, natural gifts, skills, and abilities. We discussed how to merge them with leadership and how discovering them is essential to the overall development of a great leader. Students engaged in the discussion and were very verbal in reference to using their gifts.

Participants participated in a group activity that consisted of small gift boxes with slips of paper that had various gift descriptions. Students had to take their gift and pair up with another student's gift in the room. Participants had to find gifts and figure out how they can bring their gifts together and work for the common good in ministry/church life, school, and in the community.

The participants that are often reserved and silent were observed being proactive and engaged in the activity. The activities helped engage and raise awareness about leadership and how to bridge gifts together in order to build better relationships. Students were observed taking the gifts and linking them with others. They were also observed conversing about their limited knowledge about how gifts could come together in order to build a more powerful team.

The session continued with a PowerPoint presentation and discussion about spiritual gifts. Participants began to discover their own gifts and how they can use their gifts in various leadership roles. The session closed with reminders that included student's responsibility to blog.

Session Four's title was, *YouTube Talk: I Got S.W.A.G.G.* The fundamental purpose of this session is to consider how having S.W.A.G.G. as a leader is important.

This session presented to participants the importance of interview skills, dressing for success, phone etiquette, and dining etiquette. We used various YouTube clips as a guide to teaching dining etiquette and interview skills. A PowerPoint and handout was available to students for this session (Appendix F).

The session began with prayer and lunch. It was observed that many students were taking more initiative. Usually, the participants had to be prompted to assist with set-up, check-in, and getting settled. However, it was observed the students set up lunch, assembled the others, passed out ID cards, and cleaned up without being asked. This is very different from previous sessions because participants had to be consistently reminded of behavior. However, this session students displayed growth and ownership of the program.

This is important for the research purpose because it exemplifies student's connection with leadership and what it takes to be an ideal leader. It appeared as if they have had "ah ha" moments. The participants were asked about their behavior change and many responded that since the last session, they understood they had to use their gifts more. One participant stated, "I realize that my peers feed off of me, so if I feed off negative actions, they will follow, so I got step my game up." Another participant stated, "I know that I don't say much, but I can do a lot. So I figure I would do more since I am not a talker. That is my gift, and I got to work it."

With these types of responses, the project was headed in the right direction and student's knowledge base about leadership was increasing.

The session continued with discussion and role-play about job interviews. Students were challenged to do mock interviews on the spot after they received and

completed the lesson. Five interviews were conducted. Three out of the five interviews were fair. Many students struggled with eye contact and confidence. They spoke with low voices and often struggled through simple questions such as what are your goals; what type of grades do you receive? When asked about school and extra circular activities, students had difficulty verbalizing and articulating the information. However two out of five students displayed confidence.

The program used three outside professionals to do the interviews. Participants also participated in a goal setting session. Students talked about how important it was to set goals. During the session, it was observed that many students did not know how to set goals. Participants began to link their gifts and skills with their goals. Participants were observed assisting each other with setting goals. Furthermore, it was observed that participants began to gravitate to individuals they would not normally connect with and they began to form a strong bond and relationship.

Participants were asked about the newfound bond, their responses were interesting. They said things like, "I never knew that she was this cool, and she helps me be better, you know?" It was interesting to hear participants discuss the strength of others while understanding their own weaknesses. This level of knowledge base ties back to the *Ten Principles of Leadership* discussed in Session One, thus showing the participants awareness about leadership is increasing.

Participants continued the session with a lesson in leadership development and dining etiquette. Participants were introduced to an array of dining etiquettes at business meetings, interviews, and in formal settings. The session presented *Table Setting 101*, table etiquette, and a basic outline of how to present your self at any formal function that

an employer may require an employee to attend. This session was interesting and students were observed as being very open eager to learn. Following the presentation, participants participated in a hands-on activity where they had to properly set a table that would serve a seven-course meal.

Another set of students participated in a mock dinner meeting/interview. The interviews were conducted by outside volunteers that gave constructive criticism to those who participated in the activity. The remaining students critiqued those who participated in both hands-on activities.

Session Five's title was, *Lead Now*. The fundamental purpose of this session is for students to participate in an interactive dialogue with a leader via Skype. Participants had to present three questions to the presenter. The presenter explained concepts of leadership for African-Americans. He included topics such as education and leadership, leadership at school, leadership at home, and also how young people can give back to the community.

In the session, it was observed that students were very engaged with the presenter. They did not only have questions, but they contributed to the dialogue. In comparison to the first three sessions, this was a major improvement. Students began to quote the leadership qualities and referenced many things they had already learned during the sessions. It was as if students understood leadership and they had a new concept of it.

The presenter asked participants to summarize what they had learned since being enrolled in the program. Students stated that they gained knowledge about leadership and how it connects to youth. Some said they did not know so much was required from leaders. In other words, they did not realize how much work it took to be an effective

leader. Another participant responded that they did not think they were a leader, however being in this program made them think differently about their role as a leader. Other common themes were understood gifts, dressing for success, leadership principals, and goal setting. It was interesting to hear the comments and summarization of what knowledge base participants gained.

The most interesting part of the Skype session was the dialogue about recent acts of violence on African-American youth. The presenter posed this question: "As young leaders, what is your role in educating your peers about racism and acts of violence?"

The dialogue between participants and presenter was interesting. Participants were observed being very involved and utilizing many concepts they had gained throughout the program. There were moments in which participants were using personal experiences and relating how they can be better leaders and help their classmates at school, friends and the community.

This session provide a safe and informative environment for students to gain knowledge about their role as leaders both locally and globally. In addition, participants became the learning environment. In other words, this session became about the participants. It was a time where students taught the volunteers, the researcher and the presenter. Their voices exemplified what leadership is about. They presented various spectrums of what youth need so that they are not victims. The session was transformative and informative as it presented a gateway to raise the voices our students. The session concluded forty-five minutes later due to the intense discussion and dialogue between the presenter and the participants.

Session Six began the closure of the instructional portion of the project. This session was entitled, *Education and Leadership*. The fundamental purpose of this session was to engage participants in dialogue about the importance of education and leadership. Intertwined with this theme, participants also discussed the importance of making right choices and leading others to do the same. Also, participants were introduced to the dangers of inappropriate social media sites along with guides to address what an appropriate social media site looks like for a leader.

Students examined several YouTube clips geared towards inappropriate social media sites: the image of posting fighting videos, sexting, and inappropriate texting can do damage to your image and to your ministry. Many participants found interest and agreed with the concept.

However, there were a select group of students who did not agree with the concepts presented. They felt as if social media and posting on social sites are up to the discretion of the user and it should be a private right. With much debate, a few were convinced that appropriate social media was essential to the overall image of a positive and good leader. However, some participants left feeling it was all about privacy.

The session continued with viewing the film, *the Great Debaters*. Participants were asked to consider the following questions: What can you summarize about leadership and education in this film? What traits or gifts do you recognize in the characters? How can you link African-American history to education and leadership? What is your view of African-Americans in the film? What character do you mostly likely identify with based on talents, gifts, and ambition and why and what can this movie teach us about education?



In the final session, participants continued watching the movie, *the Great Debaters*. Immediately following the movie, participants expressed their outlook on the film as it relates to education and leadership. Their responses were interesting as they began to consider the importance of leadership and how today's students do not have the same drive and push to become great.

It was observed and recorded that participants had mixed emotions about the film, but overall they connected education as an essential component to leadership. In the group discussion, it was recorded that many common themes included: The power that African-American's had during that time period, the film showed youth that were well dressed and well groomed. The participants commented strongly on this observation and they correlated back to the etiquette lesson offered through this study. It was also recorded that participants felt that many of their peers needed to view the film in order to help give them insight on how important it is to be your best in school.

The session was very insightful and a great way to close the study. The participants ended with this quote from the movie, *The Great Debtors*, "Do what you have to do so that you can do what you want to do." These powerful words resonated with students as they considered how important it is to do what is required for you and beyond. It was observed in the final comments, that participants received another "ah ha" moment because with this quote, they began making up their own beat and repeating the saying. This session was impactful and helpful to students in connecting to how making good choices, going to school and education is fundamental for youth. On May 18, 2014, the award ceremony consisted of youth and parents in a small reception. Participants

summarized what they learned to their parents and each student received a certificate of completion.

### Blog Responses

As part of the data analysis and measurement, students were asked to blog about the session. The chief purpose of the blog responses was to examine student's knowledge base about leadership since participating in the session. The blog site established did not work for many students. Participants reported difficulty logging in and responding. Therefore, a Facebook private page was created for participants to blog their reflection and for their knowledge base to be reviewed. Below, is a random sample of responses that are directly quoted from the participants from the blog site and Facebook group.

There was a random sample of interviews selected that reflected the overall experience of the particular sessions. Blog responses will help determine the overall success of the program and the overall effect on the knowledge base about leadership.

### Pre and Post-Interviews

There were pre-interviews and post-interviews conducted for this study. The purpose of the interviews is to get a level of understanding and to record the level of knowledge base as it pertains to leadership. Each student's interviews were recorded. Interview questions were completed before they could enroll in the classes. Participants answered questions about leadership, spiritual gifts and their current leadership abilities.

In this data collection process, results of the interviews can be reviewed in the outcomes section of the document. Participants completed the interviews before the

sessions and at the end of the session. All interviews were conducted privately and were recorded in order to transcribe responses. The responses were also recorded during the interview with pencil and paper. The results from the transcribed documents and written documents were compared for results.

### Pre and Post-Questionnaire

The questionnaire served as an evaluating tool that will assist with determining increase or decrease in the knowledge base about leadership with the use of technology. The questionnaire outcomes can be examined in the outcomes section of the document. The ultimate goal of the pre and post-test questionnaire was to examine any significant changes in student's knowledge base about leadership. If there is an increase or decrease in the responses, this result will show the effectiveness of the media-driven leadership program.

Participants completed the pre-assessment during the initial interviews and the post-assessment where completed at the end of the seven weeks. Participants were notified they had to complete the pre and post-assessment through the initial interview. The data was tallied and presented in an excel document to determine the results of the program.

### Parent Reflection Interviews

This evaluation tool will assist with determining effectiveness of the program based on their observation of their child. At the end of the session, parents will be asked to answer questions as it pertains to their observation of their child since entering the

program. Parents will report any changes or increase in their child's knowledge base since entering the program. With this tool, the program can triangulate the relationship between what has been learned and what has been applied. The overall projection is the program will not only increase their knowledge base, but they will take what they learned and make it an applicable component in their daily practices.

### **Analysis of Data**

The overall purpose of the project was to present to participants different areas of leadership while using media technology. If youth participate in a media technology driven leadership awareness program, then their perception of their role and ability to become leaders will increase. Through this leadership program, students will successfully bridge their perception about their role in the community as leaders and learners.

When reviewing the data from the project, blog responses, pre and post-questionnaire, pre and post-interviews and the parent reflection interview, the data shows several reoccurring themes and evidence that student's knowledge base increased since participating in the program.

*Blog Responses* presented an array of responses from each session. A random sample of responses showed that participants understood the information presented and gained knowledge about leadership and their role in the community. In the random sample, statements such as, "I did not know," "I learned," and, "I now understand," reoccurred. Using the blog response was a direct connection to the population of participants because they were accustomed to technology. Their responses reflect information gained and information applied. In other words, participants presented that

not only did they gain information; it was applicable to their everyday lives. There were some responses presented that were limited in information, thus making it difficult to process any knowledge gained.

The session that gained the most response was session on S.W.A.G.G. leadership. The blog showed that participants showed the highest interest with this topic. Based on the results, participants had reservations about their knowledge base as it pertains to job interview skills, dining etiquette, and how to dress for interviews. The least favorable discussion was the discussion on social media etiquette. Participant's blogs showed some disagreements with the concept of privacy versus public Facebook and Instagram posting. Even though students disagreed with the information, they were receptive to the information given. Below is a random sample of ten responses from the blog. The responses reflect the knowledge base of leadership after completing the specified session. The responses are as follows:

Participant Number 24: "What I learned from the leadership meeting is that everyone has a different opinion about things and they look at things differently and if you have an opinion then you should share it no matter if it is right or wrong. I kind of didn't want to be apart of this program because I am shy to talk to certain people, but when I went to the meeting it wasn't that bad. The other kids spoke to me when they were told, and also I knew a couple of people there too. Another thing that I have learned is that things are not always as bad as they seem, but if they are you're probably just over thinking it. It's not easy being a teenager, but it helps when you have trusted friends to help you along the way."

Participant 10: “From today’s session I learned that everybody has a gift. Your gift is something you love to do and other people can tell that you love to do it. It is something that comes easy to you but you have to have control of it to use it effectively. Once you find your gift you have to figure out what you can do to use it effectively because if you don’t, you’re really just wasting it because you’re not using it to the best of your ability.

Participant 15: “How to be leaders in the community. We also talked about commitment to leadership. My group and I came up with this; experimenting is trying out different things. Taking risks goes along with experimenting. It's just trying out new things. Experimenting and taking risks helps you learn more and further expand your knowledge.”

Participant 7: “During the topic S.W.A.G.G. I learned quite a bit about how to direct interviews, and how to answer the correct way when asked a question in an interview. Being able to see firsthand the types of questions managers ask you in an interview, I think will help me in the future when I actually go to an interview for a real job. We also got to look at how a formal dinner interview and meeting is set up. Like how you eat and order food. Also which fork is used for what and what glass is used for what? I had a fun time with all of it, and it was a good learning experience.”

Participant 17: “Today I learned to have a five-year plan. I learned to start now on my education for my future and to never give up. We may have some setbacks but we should still keep trying to reach our goal. Certain people will be ahead at you so you need to look the part. Some people may try to put you down and tell you, you can’t do it but all you have to do is prove them wrong. Dustin helped me realize to keep trying. We also

went back through all what we learned through the past weeks. This program taught me a lot.”

Participant 16: “Last week in the leadership meeting we reviewed the basics of etiquette and what are the qualities of a good leader. To be a good leader you must be on time, which really means you must be early to be on time and if you’re on time then you’re late. To be a professional simply means that you must dress well, be nice and talk with clarity (keeps the conversation going and with good grammar). When you are out on a business dinner meeting you should order what the host/ hostess orders or less. This is simply a sign of respect. When you attend an interview make sure it is longer than ten minutes. If you are a guy, shake the man’s hand and wait for them to sit down first. When you speak to the interviewer, make eye contact and speak firm and loud. This will ensure that you are confident in what you are saying. We also talked about how Christian leaders act on social media. Anything you put on a social network can still be seen if you delete it. Most places you apply to will search your name on social media to see how you carry yourself off the work site.”

Participant 12: “Yesterday I learned more about the leadership skills from the film that we watched. I learned that you should never give up on anything that you believe or that you want to do. I learned about more leadership skills such as start taking a step up. Show everyone that you are able to amount to more things than they think that you could. Always go that extra step because at the end it will always pay off. You never know in what way just like in the movie. Those kids didn't know what kind of challenge that they were up for. They already had thought they was smart but their teacher had something come for them. Throughout so much hard work and practice they progressed better and

better at what they did. But then it started falling apart and slowly everyone just started to drop out of it. But the two understudies stayed in there. They hung in there. Even their teacher didn't get to go to one debate and they did all that they could by themselves; they had faith in themselves. They made it a long way. They couldn't make it as far as they did without having faith in themselves and in each other and in their teacher. They made a change in peoples lives. They even kept pushing and never gave up when they had to face Harvard University. In conclusion, I have strengthened my strength and skills on leadership skills and have learned more about it.”

Participant 18: “In my Youth Leadership program journey, I learned a lot of things to better myself, in like for instance table dinner etiquette. Whenever I'm at a lunch or dinner with my boss, family or friends, I know now to always fold a napkin in my lap and to wipe the sides of my lips with it and also order whatever my boss orders to show respect and that I'm on their level. If I order a steak, order it medium rare. ‘That's the best way to eat a steak.’ Another reason to order your steak medium rare is because it shows respect to the cook. Whenever I'm done cutting my steak I will place the knife on the side of my plate with the blades facing me. The last thing is B.M.W., bread, meal and water. I also learned how to approach an interview always dressed proper to show them you're worth a chance. Don't walk in with two different hair colors with your hair all over your head with a club mini dress. I should walk in respectful and confident in myself and to look like a young lady with my hair pushed back, clean and smelling good. I always know to answer their questions in a full answers. Even if I don't know what I'm talking about relate to the question as I good as possible. My interview should be no more then ten minutes. Most of all I should make them want to reach out to me and to become one



of their team members.”

“The movie *X-Man* showed me that everyone has a power and meaning in the world in order to make it a better place and that it's up to you how you use your gifts. I also learned that youth's can have swag and that just because your young that doesn't make everything okay to treat people mean. Also you have to be careful at what you post on the Internet and that it might not be bad to you, but you have to think about your family, friends and church and life as a Christian. We also watched the movie *The Great Debaters* which opened my eyes to show me how hard it was to be a African-American in them days and how people underestimate you, but it's up to you to show the world that you have what it takes and that you can be educated and know what you're talking about. Throughout this whole program I can honestly say that this helped me and molded me in my near future...”

Participant 8: “Today in our leadership meeting I learned different styles of dinner etiquette. I also learned a dinner method called B.M.W., (not the car), which means Bread, Meal, and Water. When eating a meal you work from the outside in. The first thing you should do before you start eating is to ALWAYS put your napkin in your lap and when you need to wipe your mouth you always use the corners of the napkin. There are three different types of glasses called the water glass, white wine glass and the red wine glass. I didn't know before you sit down and eat your meal you always sit the female down before you sit down. You should *never* have you elbows on the table.”

“There are two different types of dining, which are Continental and American. The knife at the table is *always* considered the pusher. One thing I didn't know that was the best way to hold your fork and knife is to hold your palms out and balance both the

knife and the fork with your index finger. Also the butter knife is smaller than the dinner knife. You should always wait for you guest to order their food before you do because you shouldn't get more than what they order. For an example if your guest ordered a steak with a baked potato you should order the same or something a little less than what they ordered. I really learned a lot out of this session.”

Participant 11: “At last week's meeting, I learned a lot of things that I did not know about! I learned the different steps on how to become prepared for a future job interview. In a job interview, you have to know how to talk right and know what you are saying. You need to talk clear. To look professional, you should dress the right way for your job interview. Make sure you have no gum or anything in your mouth and if you have tattoos, cover them up. In order for your job to hire you, you have to let them know why they should hire you. When answering that question, do not be cocky about it.”

“During the interview, you should talk in complete sentences and restate the question in your answer. The most important thing for a job interview is to be on time. I also learned about the proper dinner etiquette for a business meeting. If everyone at the meeting is ordering a small meal, order a small meal also. There are also ways you have to use your silverware and glasses. And the last thing is to always be on time!”

Participant 19: “In the last session we learned about having spiritual gifts and being able to use your gifts to help others and to come together as one and use our gifts to change the world or impact the community. I think I can do that...Change the WORLD!

### Pre and Post-Questionnaire

The pre and post-questionnaire resulted in changes as it pertains to participant's knowledge base about leadership. For some, their responses changed after participating in the program. In a random sample of this case study, further insight about these changes can be determined. Participant number three answered beginning the program responding "no" to questions one, two and three of the questionnaire. When asked if he considered himself a leader, and does he consider himself as a leader in his church, he stated "No." In the post-questionnaire, the response was different as he considered himself as a leader, because he had a greater knowledge base about what it takes to be a leader.

Participant number seventeen was asked if she feel as if she can lead her peers. In the pre-test her response was "No." In the post-test resulted it was "Yes." This participant also had a change in response as it pertains to being able to lead her peers. In the pre-test, the response was "No." However, her answer changed in the post-test. Her response to question seven changed. She responded "No" in the post-test but in the pre-test her response was "Yes."

Participant number nine responded "No" in the pre-test on her image of being a leader (question one), however, the post-test revealed that her knowledge base has shifted and her ability to be a leader. The post-test also revealed that there was a limited knowledge base about qualities of a leader. However, in the post-test, participant number nine responded, "Yes" in reference to knowing the qualities that make a good leader. Participant number thirteen's answers shifted tremendously since participating in the program. In the post-test, the participant answered "Yes" in reference that they were a leader, however in the post-test, this result changed to "No." The same participants were

asked about their role as a leader in their church, the response remained the same and that is “No.” However, when asked if she felt she can compete in a professional setting. Her pre-test indicated “No,” but her post-test indicated “Yes.”

Participant number eleven was consistent throughout the process. This participant showed steady and stable responses from the pre-test and the post-test. This participant’s response reflected that they had a high level of knowledge base about leadership before and after the program. Her responses were “Yes” through both the pre and the post-test. See appendix D for a full result of responses based on all participants. These results are presented in a graph to show a better review and result of the answers.

#### Pre and Post-Interview

Pre and Post-Interviews were conducted in order to measure the knowledge base about leadership and to get views of the participants. In the interview there were common trends and recurring themes. Below you will find an outline of recurring themes for questions asked in the post and pre-interview.

Question one, participants were asked to explain their definition of what a leader was. In the post interview the following themes were recurring: stand out, good speaker mature, knows about leadership, nice to people, skills, understanding, and good listener. In the post-interview, recurring themes included: professional, guide others to do better, good Facebook page, get their education.

Question two pre-interviews asked to explain what qualities make a good leader. Recurring themes included: uncertain, get along with others, good character, good

decision-makers. In the post-test, the recurring themes included: know who you are, fair to all people, conduct and control, and good social media sites.

Question four asked participants to describe what teamwork is. Many responded with the question, resulting in their answers being vague, and provided minimal explanation. However, in the post interview, the common or recurring theme included the following: ability to work with people who are different, understanding people's strengths and weakness, understanding, being able to work even with differences.

Participants were also asked to discuss the importance of leadership and education. In the post-interview, many students found it difficult in connecting the two concepts. However a common theme/response included: You must know what you are talking about in order to lead and leaders must be smart. An alarming post-test response showed that this concept changed. Trending responses correlated to the movie *the Great Debaters*. Many responses included, "Do what you have to do so you can do what you want to do." Others reflected from the Skype presentation and reflected on the experience of how education and leadership is a global concept.

Participants were asked about their spiritual gifts, talents and ability. In the post-test, many participants showed difficulty in responding to the question. Only five knew what it meant to have a spiritual gift and many did not have any goals or plan. However, the post-test revealed different results. It showed that participants were able to discuss confidently their goals and their gifts. Participants also connected their gifts and abilities to doing ministry and serving in the community.

There were common trends with three participants whose results did not show any changes. Their results showed that they did not have any knowledge base before or after

the program. There responses remained short and consisted of information that cannot be measured as knowledge gained.

### Parent Interviews

The parent interviews were conducted at the end of the program. The aim and goal was to see if there was any correlation between participation in the program and application either at home, school, or the community. Parents reported significant changes in their children since participation in the program. Common themes included their children displayed more initiative at home and school. Many parents reported that they were repeating themselves less as it pertains to chores, homework, and even church activities.

Another common theme was self-confidence. Parents reported their child began to be more involved in school activities since participating in the program. One student ran for a Student Government position at her high school and won. The participant's mother reported that if it was not for this program giving her the confidence needed to move beyond her comfort zone, then she probably would not have ran for office. Parents also commented that the program helped their child think differently about education and its importance. One parent reported that her child started discussing going to college and has encouraged her (the parent) to go back. As a result, the mom said she has begun applying for college and she hoped to start next fall.

In comparison to the blog responses, many parents reported table etiquette improvements. One parent reported their child was able to confidently dine at one of the city's premier restaurants. She came home knowing her place settings and understanding

dining etiquette. Mom equates the participants receiving that scholarship to the program. She believes her child's confidence for the dinner interview and her dining etiquette was a major asset during the process.

### Outcomes

The result of the model shows that through this program student's perception and knowledge base about leadership was widely influenced and affected. Thus, proving the hypothesis to be true. If youth participate in a media technology driven leadership empowerment program, then their perception of their ability and role as a leader will increase. Through this leadership program, students successfully bridged their perception about their role in the community, home and ministry as leaders and learners. Thus, since participating in the program participants showed an increase in their knowledge base about their leadership ability, improving their perception. Participants applied what they have learned by participating in ministry programs, school programs, and other community associated programs.

Using the measurement tools, the triangulation provided a framework to prove the hypothesis true. The questionnaire showed an increase in student's knowledge base about leadership. Participant's pre and post-test proved an increase in their understanding and knowledge base about leadership. The interviews showed a good framework of their understanding, while allowing them to verbalize their understanding about leadership. Compared to the pre-test, the post-test showed an increase in their knowledge base. Also, the time spent to do the interviews, were longer in the post-test. Students appeared to

have more to say and were able to speak confidently on the topic of leadership and their role in the community.

The parent interview was an excellent indicator. It showed how students were not only learning but were applying their knowledge base. According to the parents of the participants, the program helped improve their child's understanding of their space in the community, ministry and at school. Overall, the parent interview showed that through combining technology and leadership teaching, their child showed major improvements. During the interview, parents identify these changes because the program provided valuable information that raised their child's awareness about leadership.

Overall, participants reported gaining leadership knowledge, skills, and understanding their qualities as it pertains to leadership. Participants reported having a greater appreciation of the importance of respectful relationships, understanding of gifts, skill and talents, and understanding the value of team. Among the leadership skills gained, participants least likely reported their ability to connect with ministry, however they felt more connected with school and the community. Their hesitation with the church is the need for better understanding about their role as adults in ministry.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION**

The focus group for, *A Biblical Model for Raising Awareness for Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology* had positive results and was proven to be successful. The fundamental purpose of the project was to teach leadership skills to students, using media technology as a tool to teach various leadership skills. If youth participate in a media technology driven leadership empowerment program, their perception of their ability and role as a leader will increase.

Through this leadership program, students successfully bridged their perception about their role in the community, home and ministry as leaders and learners. Thus since participating in the program participants showed an increase in their knowledge base about their leadership ability improving their perception. Participants applied what they have learned by participating in ministry programs, school programs, and other community associated programs.

The program started out with thirty-five students. Due to scheduling conflicts, it resulted in thirty participants who started the program. Out of thirty students, twenty-six successfully completed the program.

With twenty-six participants completing the program, they all reported gaining knowledge about leadership. They also learned their strengths and their weaknesses

including public speaking, learning their gifts, and working together as a team. Overall, participants gained leadership skill and additional qualities as a result of the program. Most notable, all participants reported they enjoyed the program and requested the program continue thorough the year.

At the end of the eight weeks, participants were asked about their opinion of the program. The most frequent complaint was that it was not long enough and they wished we had more time during the session.

Parents also commented about the quality of the program. They expressed that there need to be more programs offered like this in schools and churches. Many articulated that the curriculum and quality of the program was dynamic and it provided valuable information that their child needed.

There were some areas of improvements for this program. Some suggestions of what would be done differently are to expand the project to outside communities. This will help reach students outside of the context of Union Baptist Church. The program may need to include more topics such as study skills, how to fill out job applications, writing courses and opportunity for missions. Even though students were able to have mock interviews, the time frame only permitted for select students to do the interviews. If this program is continued, all participants will be able to complete a mock interview.

My goal is to continue adding to the project curriculum. This involves more film/film review, studying more relevant YouTube clips, providing additional Skype sessions and adding a children's component that would include youth in Kindergarten through fifth grade. If this project continues, the name would change to, the L.E.A.D. Now Academy. This acronym stands for Leadership, Empowerment, Achievement and

Destiny. The goals of the program would parallel the project presented. The program will also include college tours, summer internships, community service projects, and other leadership development components.

Overall, this project was a success. The ultimate goal was to increase student's knowledge base about leadership and this goal was met. Through the use of film, PowerPoint, YouTube and Skype sessions, the approach and tools used to teach leadership was post-modern, new, and fresh for the participants. The program provided relevant information with a pertinent tool, media.

What youth need today are applicable and practical tools to assist them in their understanding of who they are and what they mean to our ministries, schools, and communities. The aim of this project was to provide a space where students can unwrap and stir up their gifts. The program reached this goal and beyond.

The most transformative moment in the project was the sense of excitement from the participants. Many students expressed they really did not want to participate in the program, but after they came and realized what it was about, they could not wait to come back. The excitement and anticipation continued throughout the process. All I could think about is how many other youth are searching for a place that will take the time to teach them through their deficiencies, love them through their hurt, take what they have and make something out of them. The issue is not that students do not want to learn, but rather they were waiting for the church and the community to take the time and provide relevant programs that foster hope and answers. The issue with many churches is programs such as this are limited, inconsistent or even non-existent. My goal is to spread this program to other ministries in the community, state, and beyond.

Another transformative moment in this program was the overwhelming response from volunteers. The project utilized the youth worker staff of Union Baptist Church to assist with general operational tasks each week. Many of them expressed how the program taught them things they did not know such as the information about dinner meetings, the interaction with the Skype sessions, and the connection between the film and leadership skills. Many expressed the project was a “refresher” course for them.

The most transformative moment during the project was during an interview with a parent. The parent expressed how before this program, her daughter would not have spoken in public. As a matter of fact, she expressed how her daughter was terrified of speaking in public. However, during one of the sessions, she was made to get in front of the group and present her findings. Of course, she was nervous and did not present well. However, her mother stated if it weren't not for me correcting the participant and helping her through those fears, the inner confidence would have remained buried. Another student ran for a student government position at her school and won. Another expressed that sometimes a leader has to learn to allow others to lead. He was referencing to understanding that even the quietest participants are important and have the ability to be excellent leaders.

When participants are transformed, we are transformed. When they achieve, we achieve. That was the aim of this project and the aim was met. The goal was to raise the level of awareness for leadership in youth; the project was successful and reached that goal.

**APPENDIX A**  
**PARENT INFORMATION PACKET**

*A Biblical Model For Raising Awareness and Empowering Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology*

**Participant Application**

**Participant Information**

Participant's Name (First, Middle, Last):

\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade : \_\_\_\_\_

School Student Attends: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Father Mobile Number \_\_\_\_\_ Father Work \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mother Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother Mobile Number \_\_\_\_\_ Mother Work \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Member ( ) Yes ( ) No If yes please print your member number \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Emergency Contact (other than parent)

**REQUIRED:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent Information and Agreement

The researcher, Kia Hood, reserves the right to decline the application of any child or send home any child who, according to the researcher's discretion, is not a desirable associate for the other campers, or puts him/herself or others at risk.

Photographs will occasionally be taken of the children during the Program. I, the undersigned, consent to the use of pictures of my child for displays, brochures and promotional materials with no compensation to my child or me.

**Acknowledgement of Risk of Injury/Release and Waiver.** I acknowledge and understand there may be a risk of injury involved in the activities, which my child will engage in during the program. In consideration of Kia Hood allowing my child to participate in the program, I hereby agree to release, waive, discharge, covenant not use, hold harmless and indemnify, on behalf of respective officials, agents, employees, directors, members, officers and other staff members firm ability to us and our child, as well as our personal representatives, assigns, heirs and next of kin, for any and all claims, suits or causes of action from or out of any injury, known or unknown, to property or body, that my child may suffer from participation in

this research project and do hereby expressly assume the risk of injury associated with participation in said program.

**Certification of Ability to Participate and Medical Authorization.** I, the undersigned, hereby certify to the best of my knowledge my child is able to safely participate in the program activities for which he or she as been registered.

I, the undersigned, understand in case of illness or injury of my child, Kia Hood, or the church will try to notify me, or the emergency contact listed on the Program Application Form. In the event of a medical emergency concerning my child at a time when either I or the emergency contact person cannot be notified, I hereby authorize Kia Hood or my child's caregiver, as applicable, to obtain necessary medical care and/or treatment, including but not limited to first aid, X-Ray, examinations, and aesthetic, medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment or hospital care and I hereby accept the sole financial responsibility for such medical care, first aid or treatment.

**Accident Insurance-**Participants are responsible for their own accident insurance when participating in the assigned research program

I, the undersigned, have read this release and understand all of its terms. I execute it voluntarily and with full knowledge of its meaning and significance.

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Developing Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners Leadership Program

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR MINOR CHILD

Faculty Supervisor/Primary Investigator: Dr. Sir Walter L. Mack Jr./Dr. Herbert Miller II

Student Investigator(s)/Research Assistant(s): Kia Hood-United Theological Seminary

Doctoral Student

**Title of Project:** *A Biblical Model for Raising Awareness and Empowering Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners for Leadership in the Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology.*

I acknowledge that on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), I was informed by Miss Kia R. Hood of United Theological Seminary of a project having to do with the following:

This project's aim is to empower and raise awareness for peer-leaders and peer-learners about leadership while using media technology as a tool. This model will aid students to identify their ability to be leaders and discover ways in which they can use their gifts, talents, and abilities in their communities, especially in ministry. The use of technology as an instrument that is relevant to the population in this study. The theory guiding this research has shown that youth spend over seven hours a day using media to communicate, learn and entertain.

The module will consist of youth between the ages of fourteen through seventeen from Union Baptist Church. Participants will participate in a seven-week workshop that will meet once a week, examining leadership skills and viewing it through the lens of the participants. The qualitative research strategies used consist of the following: pre-

assessments, post-assessments, participant interviews and parent interviews. This strategy's goal is to engage youth to consider themselves as leaders and agents of change, resulting in positive outcomes and personal development.

---

I have received a copy of the parental information letter or other communication to parents providing the essentials of the proposed project. I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my child's participation in this project and agree with full knowledge of all details to allow my child to participate. I understand I may withdraw my child's participation in this project at any time without prejudice or penalty of any kind, and that the investigator will be sensitive to my child's feelings and protect my child's privacy.

I do \_\_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_\_ (check one) give my consent for my child to participate.

Child's name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent or guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject should sign two copies of this form. Keep one copy and return the other copy to the investigator.

**APPENDIX B**  
**PRE AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRE**

***A Biblical Model for Empowering Youth To Be Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the  
Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology***

**Pre and Post-Assessment**

Instructions: Please circle the answer that is the best fit

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	
1. Do You consider yourself to be a leader?	Yes	No
2. Do You avoid making decisions?	Yes	No
3. Do You feel as if you are a leader in your church?	Yes	No
4. Do You consider yourself a leader in school	Yes	No
5. Do You understand your current leadership abilities	Yes	No
6. Do You know what qualities make a good leader?	Yes	No
7. Do you feel as if you have the opportunity to be a leader in your ministry/church?	Yes	No
8. Do You Understand your role as a youth leader in your church/school/family structure?	Yes	No

9. Do you feel as if you have the knowledge base to lead your peers?	Yes	No
10. Do you feel as if you have the knowledge base to teach others about leadership?	Yes	No
11. Do you think the Bible speaks about youth being leaders?	Yes	No
12. Do you believe God has designed youth to be leaders?	Yes	No
13. I think positively about myself as a leader.	Yes	No
14. I feel as if I have the knowledge base to compete in a professional setting.	Yes	No
15. Do you feel as if your peers view you as a leader?	Yes	No
16. Do you feel you have what it takes to work well with others?	Yes	No

**APPENDIX C**  
**PARENT ASSESSMENT**

*A Biblical Model for Empowering Youth To Be Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the  
Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology*

Parent Assessment

1. Do you feel as if your child has applied their knowledge base to aspects at home after completing the program? If so please describe below?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you feel as if your child has applied their knowledge base about leadership to aspects at school after completing this program? If so, please describe.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Have your child improved their perception of their leadership ability after completing this program? If so, please describe below?

Can you describe ways in which your child has shown that they can be a leader or if they have gain knowledge about leadership after completing this program?

**APPENDIX D**

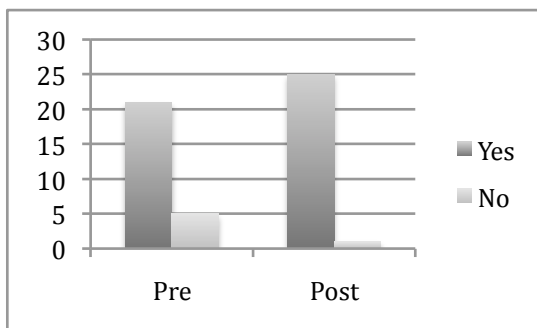
**PRE AND POST-ASSESSMENT RESULTS**



**PRE AND POST-ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

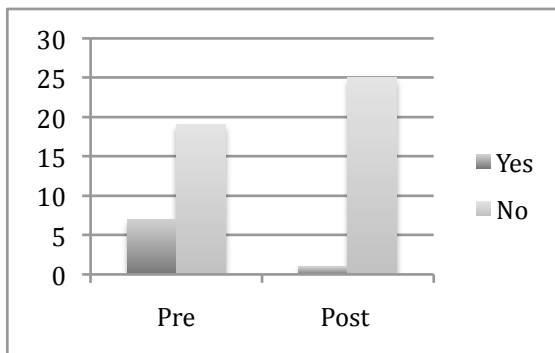
Question 1.

Do you consider yourself to be a leader?



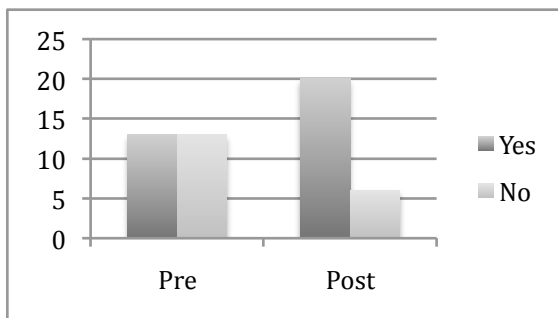
Question 2.

Do you avoid making decisions?



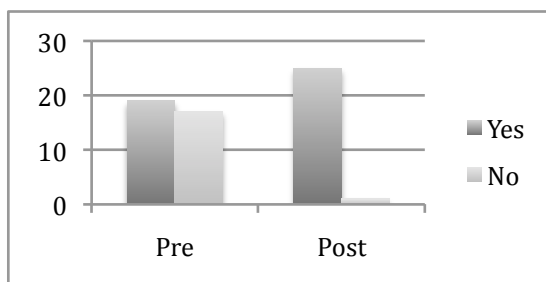
Question 3.

Do you feel as if you are a leader in your church?



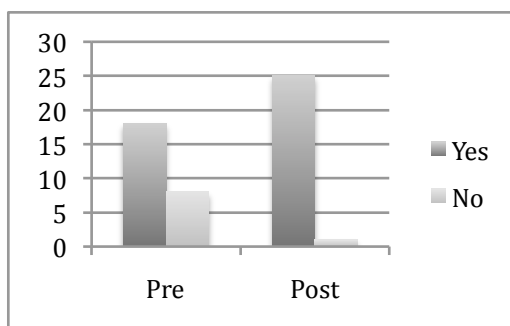
Question 4.

Do you consider yourself as a leader in your school?



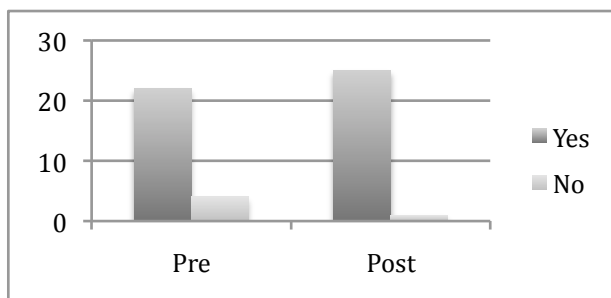
Question 5.

Do you understand your current leadership abilities?



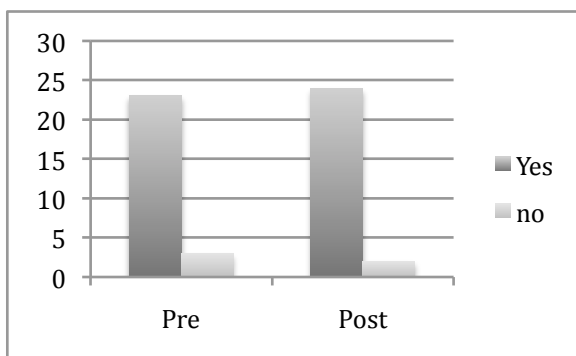
Question 6.

Do you know what qualities make a good leader?



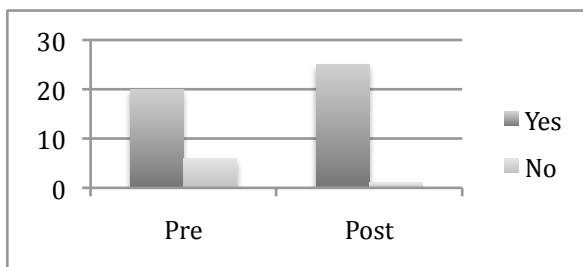
## Question 7.

Do you feel as if you have the opportunity to be a leader in your ministry/church?

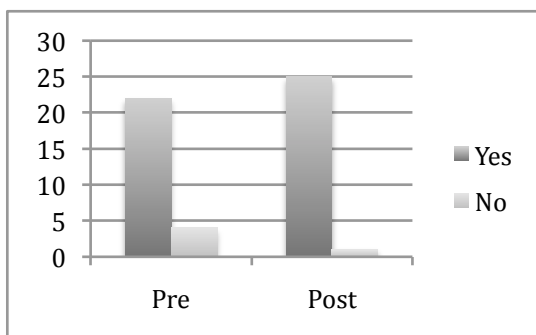


## Question 8.

Do you understand your role as a youth leader in your church/school/family structure?

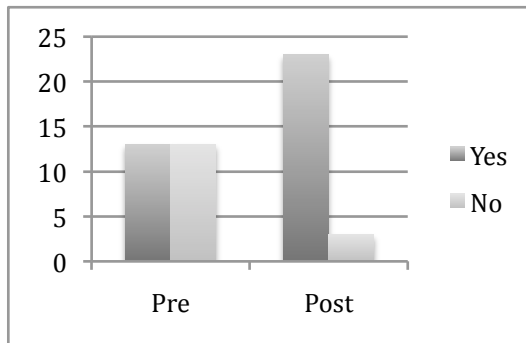


Question 9. Do you feel as if you have the knowledge base to lead your peers?



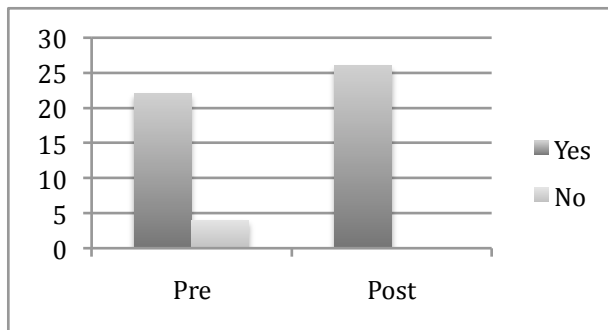
## Question 10.

Do you feel as if you the knowledge base to teach others about leadership?



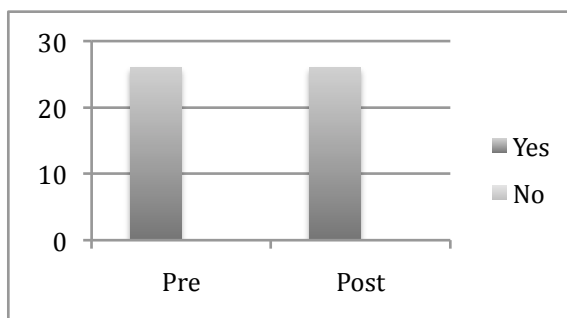
## Question 11.

Do you think that the Bible speaks about youth being leaders?



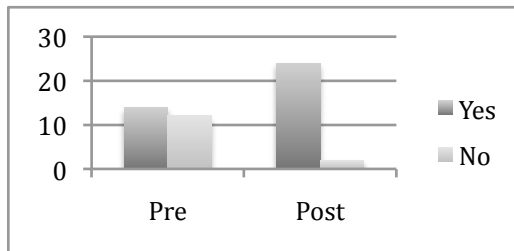
## Question 12.

Do you believe that God has designed young people/youth to be leaders?



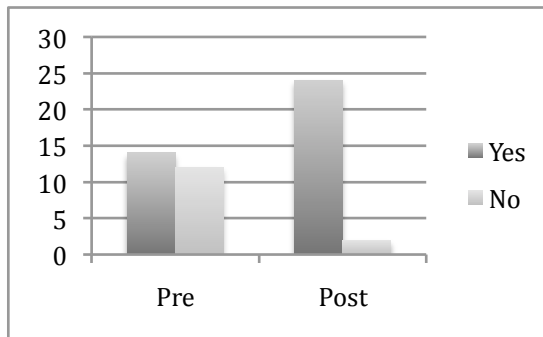
## Question 13.

I think positively about myself as a leader.



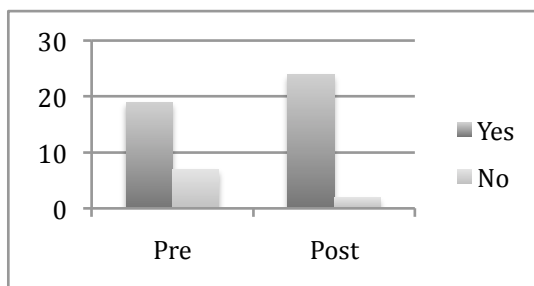
## Question 14.

I feel as if I have the knowledge base to compete in professional settings.



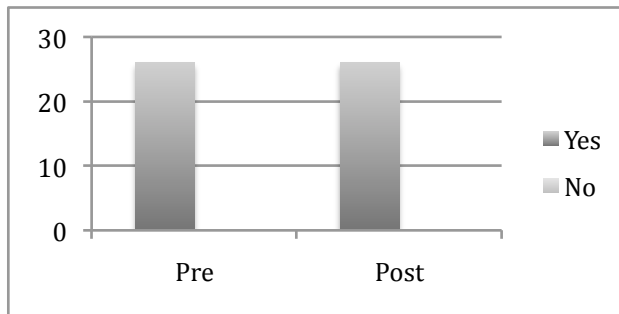
## Question 15.

Do you feel as if your peers view you as a leader?



Question 16.

Do you feel you can work well with others (teamwork)?



## **APPENDIX E**

### **HANDOUT-IT'S IN ME: DISCOVERING MY GIFTS**

***A Biblical Model for Raising Awareness for Peer-Leaders and Peer-Learners in the  
Post-Modern Generation Using Media Technology***

Session Topic: *It's In Me: Discovering My Spiritual Gifts*

Scripture Focus: I Corinthians 12:1-11

The fundamental purpose of today's session is to consider how gifts are essential to leadership development. Each of us contains gifts and talents that can be used to the glory of God. For many young people, gifts can be categorized in so many different categories. In many of your interviews, I posed the question, what are your gifts and talents. Many of you stated that you did not know what your gifts where, while others mentioned that you have the gifts of sports, music, dance or even writing. In today's lesson we will think about what gifts you have and how your gifts are leadership assets for your future and especially for the Kingdom of God.

Section I–II Corinthians 12:1-11 – Let's Discover Together

**I. What is a Spiritual Gift(s)?**

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**Youth Terminology**-Spiritual Gifts are those special things in which you are really good at doing and have a passion for doing it. These gifts are special because they are given to us by God, for God.



Let's look at what some scriptures say about these gift(s):

Romans 12:6-8

1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-30;

Ephesians 4:7-8,11-12

1 Peter 4:9-11

### Use the Gifts

Even though God has given us these gifts, we should use the gift(s) to

1. \_\_\_\_\_ God.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the community.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ strengthen our church.

### Group Talk-What is Your X Factor

1. What were some of the different gifts did you notice in the move?

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2. What were some ways in which the different gifts or talents that the students had, helped each other.

3. What were some ways in which the different gifts or talents that the students had could help each other?

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4. What are some gifts that are surrounded in this room that could help strengthen your ministry\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Open and Be Surprised- Group Activity**

#### **Share Your Gifts**

Leadership and knowing your fit is important because:

Your gifts will-5 Principals:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**APPENDIX F**  
**HANDOUT- S.W.A.G.G.**

## **I Got S.W.A.G.G.-Proper Etiquette For Youth-Leaders and Learners**

### **Youth Leadership Development Session I**

#### **Introduction**

The fundamental purpose of this session is to consider how having S.W.A.G.G. as a leader is important. In an age where it is popular to post inappropriate pictures and status, our youth leaders must understand the consequences, both good and bad, when it comes to social media, interview skills, dressing for success, phone etiquette, and dining etiquette to dress for success.

In this session we will review various YouTube clips and hands-on experiences to bring awareness of how to be a more effective leader and how to have S.W.A.G.G. as a leader.

#### **Biblical Concept of S.W.A.G.G. Leadership–II Tim. 4: 11-17**

What did Paul say to about Timothy's leadership?

Be thy example in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Practical Guidance**

##### **S.W.A.G.G. In My Interview Skills**

Nailing that interview is essential to landing that job, scholarship, is essential. A good leader knows their strengths and they know their weakness. The following areas are essential for future leaders:

**Interview Skills**

1. C \_\_\_\_\_ about who you are in your interview.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. C \_\_\_\_\_ about your appearance.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. C \_\_\_\_\_ effectively and truthfully.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. C \_\_\_\_\_ to the job and tasks.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. C \_\_\_\_\_ Resume is important. Make sure that everything is true and your information is accurate.

**Video and Practice Discussion Notes****S.W.A.G.G.-My Social Media Skills**

Social Media is a vital part of our everyday lives. They help us reconnect with people, assist with homework/school assignments, check on friends and family, and help connect to things going on across the world. The world of social media has its downfall too. While we love putting our pictures up, posting our thoughts, and reposting images,

we have to be careful with such actions because they can cause you a lifetime of regret and regression. Here are a few things that good leaders should have on their social media

\_\_\_\_\_ your life as ministry and not a mystery

## **2 Corinthians 5:20-21**

Your \_\_\_\_\_ Should Represent the Vision of God

## **Ephesians 2:10**

Your \_\_\_\_\_ Should Represent Christ

## **Psalms 19:14**

### **Video and Practical Discussion Notes:**

#### **S.W.A.G.G.–At A Company Dinner Meeting or Business Meeting**

Many of you will be invited to dinner with your boss, for a scholarship for your school, or to land that perfect job. Having proper dining etiquette is essential and youth leaders and learners should know how to handle interviews. Let us consider the following guidelines for proper table and business meeting etiquette:

Be \_\_\_\_\_ for your meeting. Always have all items ready and prepared. Know what your topic is and have it prepared so that everyone knows what is going on.

Be \_\_\_\_\_ at all times. Professionalism means you understand and respect the differences of others in the meeting.

Always \_\_\_\_\_ what the invitee is ordering. Order what they order or in the same category

Always be \_\_\_\_\_. Showing up late does not represent someone who is taking the meeting seriously.

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